This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

https://books.google.com

WILLIAM B. CAIRNS COLLECTION
OF
AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS
1650-1920

WILLIAM B. CAIRNS
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Stories of the Heart. (Just published.) Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Planter's Northern Bride. Beautifully Illustrated. Two volumes, paper cover, 600 pages. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Linda. The Young Pilot of the Belle Creole. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Robert Graham. The Sequel to, and Continuation of Linda. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Courtship and Marriage. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Two vols, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Marcus Warland. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Love after Marriage. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Eoline; or, Magnolia Vale. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

The Banished Son. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Helen and Arthur. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Copies of any of the above Works will be sent by Mail to any one, Free of Postage, on mailing the Price in a letter to Peterson & Brothers.

Digitized by Google

W2308

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS' PUBLICATIONS.

The Books on this Page are the Best and Latest Publications by the most Popular and Celebrated Writers in the World. They are also the most Readable and Entertaining Books published.

Suitable for the Parlor, Library, Sitting-Room, Railroad, Steamboat, or Chamber Reading

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS, PHILADELPHIA.

MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS' WORKS.

Mary Derwent. This is Mrs. Ann S. Stephens' new work. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, $1.25.

Fashion and Famine. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Old Homestead. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Gipsy's Legacy; or, the Heiress of Greenhurst. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

COOK BOOKS. BEST IN THE WORLD.

Miss Leslie's New Cookery Book. Being the largest, best, and most complete Cook Book ever got up by Miss Leslie. Bound. Price $1.25.

Mrs. Hale's New Cook Book. By Mrs. Sarah J. Hale. One volume, bound. Price One Dollar.

Miss Leslie's New Receipts for Cooking. Complete in one volume, bound. Price One Dollar.

Widdifield's New Cook Book, or, Practical Receipts for the Housewife. Recommended by all. One volume, cloth. Price One Dollar.

MRS. HALE'S RECEIPTS.

Mrs. Hale's Receipts for the Million. Containing Four Thousand Five Hundred and Forty-five Receipts, Facts, Directions, and Knowledge for All, in the Useful, Ornamental, and Domestic Arts. Being a complete Family Directory and Household Guide for the Million. By Mrs. Sarah J. Hale. One volume, 800 pages, strongly bound. Price, $1.25.

MISS PARDOE'S WORKS.

Confessions of a Pretty Woman. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. 50 cents.

The Jealous Wife. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

The Wife's Trials. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

The Rival Beauties. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

Romance of the Harem. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

The whole of the above Five works are also bound in cloth, gilt, in one large octavo volume. Price $2.50.

JAS. A. MAITLAND'S GREAT WORKS.

The Diary of an Old Doctor. Complete in two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in cloth, $1.25.

The Watchman. Complete in two large vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, $1.25.

The Wanderer. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

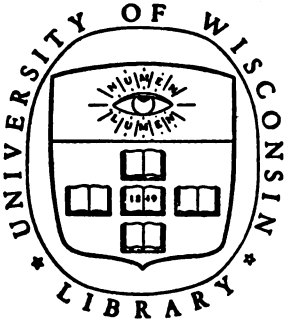
The Lawyer's Story; or, The Orphan's Wrongs. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Sartaroe. A Tale of Norway. Highly recommended by Washington Irving. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Copies of any of the above Works will be sent by Mail to any one, Free of Postage, on mailing the Price in a letter to Peterson & Brothers.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

HAUNTED HOMESTEAD.

WITH

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR.

BY

MRS. EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "THE LOST HEIRESS," "DESERTED WIFE," "MISSING BRIDE," "INDIA," "WIFE'S VICTORY," "RETRIBUTION," "DISCARDED DAUGHTER," "CURSE OF CLIFTON," "THE THREE BEAUTIES," "VIVIA, THE SECRET OF POWER," "THE LADY OF THE ISLE," ETC., ETC.

Complete in one large volume, neatly bound in cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five Cents; or in two volumes, paper cover, for One Dollar.

The Publishers take pleasure in being able to present to the public another new and charming work of the popular American Authoress, Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. She is excelled by no living female writer in the world. Her style is free from insipidity on the one hand and bombast on the other; and though we meet with forcible, we are never startled with inflated language. Her characters are rarely under, but never overdrawn. Her scenes are life pictures, her incidents founded on facts, and her sentiments are characterized by a singular purity both of conception and expression. She has the rare faculty of saying what she means, and of saying it in such a manner as that her meaning cannot be misinterpreted. In short, she possesses in an eminent degree those qualifications which are the peculiar prerogatives of a good writer; while she delights the reader's imagination with her descriptive beauty, she applies home truths to his understanding with the force of rational conviction. The "Haunted Homestead" has been pronounced by those who have read the proof-sheets, to be her best work. This is sufficient to commend it to perusal, and we anticipate for it a great popularity.

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS also publish a complete and uniform edition of all of Mrs. Southworth's works, any one, or all of which, will be sent to any place in the United States, *free of postage*, on receipt of remittances. The following are their names:

THE LADY OF THE ISLE. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

Digitized by Google

"As a story writer, this lady has no superior. She ranks as the first female author of America, and deservedly so. Her works have attained the highest reputation, not only as works of fiction, but for the peculiar beauty and fascination which she weaves into every page of her romances. Her descriptions of character and incidents are life-like and vivid, and always charm and delight the reader."—*Banner, Clarion, Pa.*

THE TWO SISTERS. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Complete in two large volumes. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

"This volume is from the pen of the first female author of America. There is more originality in the productions of Mrs. Southworth than in any other author we know of, of the female sex. She has a comprehensiveness of intellect not surpassed by Dickens or Bulwer, and as great a facility of detail as the former of these eminent authors. Long may she live to give us more of the splendid creations of her imagination. In the present state of literature in this country, we could illy spare such a writer as Mrs. Southworth."—*N. Y. Police Gazette.*

THE THREE BEAUTIES. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

"This is a vivid picture of life, manners, and scenery in the sunny South. Mrs. Southworth's fictions have gained an almost unprecedented popularity, by their intense and exciting interest, and the strength of limning displayed in her delineations of character. Each has a spell of fascination which irresistibly fetters the attention, and impresses the mind of the reader. In the volume of the 'The Three Beauties' this charm is felt throughout, and one is puzzled to find a *rationale* for the power that enthrals him. The character of Imogene Summerfield is one of the most beautiful specimens of portraiture we have ever met—in which all the elements that ennoble and render lovely the female character, are most happily combined. The plot of the story is ingenious, well planned, and well carried out."—*Courier.*

VIVIA; THE SECRET OF POWER. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Complete in two large volumes. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

"The originality and beauty of Mrs. Southworth's writings are known and acknowledged every where. She is probably the best female fiction writer now living, and any thing coming from her pen will pay for a perusal and command a large sale. Those who wish to read a new novel entirely above and distinct from the common twenty-five cent order now so plenty, and untainted by blood-and-thunder recitals, should secure a copy of this work."—*Lycoming Gazette.*

Digitized by Google

INDIA; THE PEARL OF PEARL RIVER. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

"Mrs. Southworth is the first female writer of America, beyond the shadow of a doubt."—*N. Y. Weekly Dispatch.*

"She is a writer of genius and originality, and has no superior in depicting character and scenery."—*Buffalo Courier.*

RETRIBUTION; OR, THE VALE OF SHADOWS. A Tale of Passion. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

"In power of description she has no superior."—*Baltimore Republican and Argus.*

THE LOST HEIRESS. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Being a splendid picture of American Life; every body admiring and applauding it as a master production. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

"'The Lost Heiress' is written in a pure and elegant style, the plot is simple, though sufficiently intricate to excite and sustain the interest of the reader, and the moral unexceptionable. It will find an unexceptionable welcome."—*Northern Budget.*

"All will agree that Mrs. Southworth is the best American writer of the age."—*Philadelphia Merchant.*

THE MISSING BRIDE; OR, MIRIAM, THE AVENGER. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

"She is one of the most original and talented of living female writers."—*Public Ledger.*

THE WIFE'S VICTORY; AND NINE OTHER NOUVELLETTES. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. It is embellished with a view of Prospect Cottage, the residence of the author, as well as a view of Brotherton Hall. Complete in two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

"She is the best fiction writer in the country."—*Buffalo Express.*

"We always read her creations with great pleasure."—*Sunday News.*

THE CURSE OF CLIFTON. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

"Her pictures of life are vivid and truthful."—*Sunday Times.*

"Her scenes stand out in bold relief—like a splendid painting from a skillful artist."—*Phila. Advertiser.*

Digitized by Google

THE DISCARDED DAUGHTER. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

"Mrs. Southworth, as an author, is well known to our reading circles. We have regarded her as the first of American female novelists—in the power of delineating passion and character, she has no superior. Her works from these characteristics are always popular—while her own genial nature assures their truthfulness."—*Free West, Chicago, Ills.*

THE DESERTED WIFE. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

"Mrs. Southworth is, beyond all question, the most powerful female writer in America, if not in the world. No one ever read a chapter of one of her works without wishing to read the whole book, and none ever read one of her books without admiring the rare genius of its author, and wishing that she might soon write another. The 'Deserted Wife' will be welcomed by such, especially; and those who have never read the works of this gifted woman should not fail to buy this book."—*Jersey Blue, Camden, N. J.*

The whole of Mrs. Southworth's Works are also published in a very fine style, bound in the very best and most elegant and substantial manner, in full Crimson, with beautifully gilt edges, full gilt sides, gilt backs, etc., etc., making them the best and most acceptable books for presentation, at the price, published in the country. Price of either one in this style, Two Dollars.

IN PRESS, AND WILL BE SHORTLY PUBLISHED.

HICKORY HALL. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

LOVE'S LABOR WON. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar and Twenty-five cents.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW; OR, THE ISLE OF RAYS. By Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1,25.

☞ Copies of either edition of any of Mrs. Southworth's Works will be sent to any person, to any part of the United States, *free of postage*, on their remitting the price of whatever works they may wish, to the publishers, in a letter post-paid.

Published and for sale by

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS,

No. 306 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE HAUNTED HOMESTEAD.—Page 62.

Digitized by Google

THE

HAUNTED HOMESTEAD:

And Other Novellettes.

WITH AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR.

BY

MRS. EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "DESERTED WIFE," "LOST HEIRESS," "INDIA," "THE CURSE OF CLIFTON," "MISSING BRIDE," "DISCARDED DAUGHTER," "LADY OF THE ISLE," "THREE BEAUTIES," ETC.

A residence for woman, child, or man,
A dwelling-place,—but yet no habitation;
A house,—but under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication.
For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
That said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!—*Hood.*

Philadelphia:
T. B. PETERSON AND BROTHERS,
306 CHESTNUT STREET.

Digitized by Google

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Digitized by Google

Rare Books
Cairns
PS
2892
H29
1860

DEDICATION.

TO MRS. ELLEN H. BURNETTE,

OF NEW YORK.

My Dearest Ellen:

In memory of the Bride's Ghost, that so troubled our Christmas and New Year's festivities, at Prospect Cottage three years since,—and that we afterwards saw "exorcised" in the presence of some hundred persons in the city, last Spring—I beg to inscribe to you, with my sincere esteem and affection, this volume of Nouvellettes.

Emma D. E. N. Southworth.

February 1*st*, 1860.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THE Nouvellettes that comprise this volume, are all founded on facts, "stranger than fiction," that have come under my own personal observation, or have been communicated to me by persons of reliable veracity.

For the seemingly supernatural phenomena of "The Haunted Homestead" and "The Spectre Revels," I have endeavored to find a natural solution; though it is but fair to add, that many of the mysteries remain unexplained, even unto this day.

E. D. E. N. S.

FEBRUARY 1ST, 1860.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PAGE

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR,... 29

THE HAUNTED HOMESTEAD,..... 45

THE PRESENTIMENT,..... 113

THE SPECTRE REVELS,..... 245

THE WIDOW'S SON,..... 279

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

THE ancestors of Mrs. Southworth were, on either side, French and English Roman Catholics, who in 1632 accompanied Leonard Calvert to America, and helped to found St. Mary's, the first settlement in Maryland, where they became extensive landed proprietors.

Here their descendants continued for generations, holding honorable posts, and taking important parts in the government of the Province.

When the American Revolution broke out, they were among the first to take up arms in the colonial cause; and the names of Covington, Wailes, and Nevitte are not unhonored in the local annals of the South.

Emma D. E. N. Southworth was the elder daughter of Captain Charles Lecompte Nevitte, of Alexandria, Virginia, and of his second wife, Susannah George Wailes, of St. Mary's, Maryland. He was a large importing merchant of Alexandria. During the naval troubles with France, his vessels and cargoes were seized by the French, and his business thrown into inextricable embarrassment. During tne war of 1812–15, Captain Nevitte served at the head of a company of volunteers, and received a wound in the

Digitized by Google

chest, from which he never fully recovered. Captain Nevitte, at the age of forty-five, married his second wife, Susannah George Wailes, a girl of fifteen, the only child of a widowed, mother from whom she would not well be separated. In consequence of this they removed together to Washington city, where they leased conjointly the commodious house on New Jersey Avenue, long previously occupied as a residence by General Washington. Here, in the very chamber once tenanted by General Washington, Emma was born. She was a child of sorrow from the first year of her life. Thin in frame, and dark in complexion, with a pair of great wild eyes, she had no soft infantile beauty to attract love; and for the first three years of her life, judging from what she has since heard, she was nothing but an unmitigated trouble to her friends. But this child was gifted by a vitality that enabled her to live not only through the illness of her infancy and childhood, but also through the heavy misfortunes of her girlhood and womanhood.

When Emma was about three years old, her sister Charlotte was born. The latter was a lovely child, with rounded form, fair, rosy complexion, soft blue eyes, and flaxen hair, that in after years became a dark, bright chestnut. She was of a happy, social, loving nature; and naturally won all hearts around her—parents, cousins, nurses and servants, who had been tired out with three years' attendance upon the willful little imp, her elder sister.

Among the friends that surrounded their infancy was their grandmother, Mistress Dorothy Wailes, a Maryland gentle-

Digitized by Google

woman of the old school, whose imposing form and benignant face made the earliest and deepest personal impression, and whose unvarying kindness was the greatest earthly blessing of many years of Emma's life.

Emma was passionately attached to her father, and even his evident and natural partiality for his "Dove-eyed darling," as he called his fairer child, did not weaken this strong adhesion. Captain Nevitte was very often from home for months at a time. And all Emma's life seemed then divided into two marked periods—the happy time when he was home, the sad one when he was absent; and every event dated from one of two epochs—sadly, "Since father went away;" joyfully, "Since father came home."

But at last that father, who had never recovered the effects of his wounds, while in St. Mary's contracted a severe cold, which settled on his lungs. He returned home only to take to his bed. His health declined rapidly. And then all Emma's joys and sorrows assumed these forms—"Father is able to walk about;" "Father is confined to his bed."

Captain Nevitte was a Roman Catholic. His young wife and his wife's mother were Episcopalians. Yet there was no uncharitable theological discussion in this family. There was an absolute toleration and respect for each other's opinions.

One day Emma and Charlotte were carefully dressed and taken into their father's sick room. They found all the family assembled, with several of the neighbors, around their father's bed. Father Lucas, the priest of St. Peter's,

Digitized by Google

was there in his sacerdotal vestments. He had come to administer the last consolations of the Church to the dying man, and to christen the children beside his death-bed. When these rites were over, their father laid his hands in blessing upon the children's heads; after which they were taken from the room.

Emma does not know how long it was after this, or where she was standing, or who it was that came to her and said—"Your father is dead." But she remembers the shock of an irreparable loss—the sharp wound of a first great grief; and how, with a vague impulse to run away, as if to fly the scene would be to escape the sorrow, she turned and fled—fled with her utmost speed until at some distance from home she fell, exhausted.

After this followed the dark pageantry of the funeral, that seemed to her like some hideous dream. For months succeeding she ruminated in solitude on life, death, heaven and hell, with a painful intensity of thought, injurious as it was unnatural to a child so young, for Emma was at this time scarcely five years old. At length came Father Lucas with his church catechism; but never had "holy priest" a more perplexing pupil than little Emma, who insisted upon having a satisfactory reason for every thing which she was called upon to believe. If Emma's Protestant friends did not oppose, neither certainly did they co-operate with Father Lucas, who presently therefore resigned his office of spiritual guide. Neither was the Episcopal teacher, with "the thirty-nine articles," who succeeded him, a whit more successful. In fact, at five years old, Emma preferred,

Digitized by Google

as spiritual instructor, old Uncle Biggs with his ghost stories.

This "Uncle Biggs" was a faithful old family servant, who had followed Mrs. Wailes from St. Mary's to Washington, and remained attached to the family in the united capacities of gardener, coachman, wood-chopper, marketer—in a word, man of all work, or rather *gentleman of all avocations*; for it is probable that Uncle Biggs, in his short breeches and white stockings, shoe-buckles and cocked hat, and grandiloquent conversation, would have resented being called "a man."

Upon occasions when Emma's grandmother and mother would go out to spend an evening, her nurse, Liza, would be absent after her own devices, and the children would be left to follow theirs, Uncle Biggs would come into the house, take Emma upon one knee and Charlotte upon the other, and with his arm around each little form, and each little head pillowed against his kind breast, amuse the children for hours by telling ghost stories. Uncle Biggs, by his own account, was a highly favored ghost-seer, holding frequent communion with the visible spirits of the departed. What gave his stories such intense interest for Emma was, that he professed frequently to see and speak with the spirit of her father, a prodigy that the child fully believed, and which she desired yet dreaded to prove.

After Captain Nevitte's death, Emma's grandmother and mother were in very straitened circumstances, and found it extremely difficult to keep up the style of living to which they had been accustomed. Mrs. Wailes had some little property

Digitized by Google

that brought her in a small income; they had besides the lease of the house, which was, for that day, considered to be sumptuously furnished. Mrs. Wailes, therefore, yielded to the advice of her friends, and received a few select boarders. But she was a lady of the old school, and never could learn to present a bill; so that enterprise was given up in a year. But they still lived in the spacious old house upon their narrow income.

From the age of five to ten years old, Emma was a little, thin, dark, wild-eyed elf, shy, awkward, and unattractive, and was in consequence very much left to herself. She spent her time in solitude, reverie, or mischief; took to the old, shady garden, to attics, cellars, and cocklofts, consorting with pigeons, cats, or with the old negroes in the kitchen —listening, with open ears and mind, to ghost-stories, old legends, and tales of the times "when the old folks (her forefathers) were rich, and saw no end to the company which made them poor at last."

The greatest pleasures of those days were the frequent visits the family made down to St. Mary's—sometimes sailing in a packet-boat down the majestic Potomac, as far as Blackistone's Island, opposite which they landed; and at other times going in the old family carriage, down through the grand old forest, that lay almost unbroken between the District of Columbia and the shores of the Chesapeake. In this neighborhood stood the old colonial homesteads, whose erection dated back to the earliest days of the first settlements of Maryland, inhabited also by retired old folks, whose memories were magazines of heroic adventures,

Digitized by Google

family legends, Indian traditions, and tales of courage and of cruelty, of wonder and fear. All this was very stimulating nutriment to the mind of the future novelist, who silently absorbing everything, revealing nothing, got about this time the ungracious reputation of being a dunce. Thus, year after year, Emma grew more lonely, retired more into herself, until, notwithstanding a strong, ardent, and demonstrative nature, she became cold, reserved, and abstracted in manner, even to seeming absence of mind.

It was about the tenth year of Emma's age, that her mother was married to Mr. J. L. Henshaw of Boston. As Mrs. H. was still unwilling to leave her mother, the family continued to reside together in the old house on New Jersey Avenue. About three years after this union, a select school was opened on the first floor of this house, of which Mr. and Mrs. H. were the principals, and Emma and her sister were among the first pupils. Here Emma first discovered that she possessed some mental power—a discovery quite as surprising to herself as it was to others. She made rapid and easy progress, and in less than two years was at the head of the school. The hours not devoted to legitimate study were passed in the old garret, or the great old-fashioned, heavily-shaded garden, reading every book of every sort that she could lay her hands on. The vacations of Christmas and Midsummer were often passed in long visits to St. Mary's, among the old homesteads and old scenes, haunts of "the old ancestral spirits," from whom the destined novelist received her earliest inspirations. She grew to love with enthusiasm the history, traditions,

Digitized by Google

and scenery of her forefathers' district—the great forests of Maryland, the blue peaks of Virginia, and above all, perhaps, the glorious river and bay that roll between them. Here, too, in country sports and in active exercise, particularly that of horseback riding, to which she was excessively addicted, she gained the health and vigor to which her childhood had been a stranger.

Thus passed the earlier years of Emma's girlhood, in the sketch of which we have endeavored to show the development of the *mind* alone; the history of a young girl's *heart*, though bearing far the most important part in her destiny, is too sacred for any eye but that of God, "who made and knows its every chord." * * *

Let us pass in silence over the days of Emma's marriage, and come at once to the period when, three years after, Mrs. Southworth found herself broken in health, spirits and fortune, a widow in fate though not in fact, with two babes looking up to her for the support she could not give them. Her grandmother, the kind and constant friend and protectress of her youth, died about this time. Her sister Charlotte had gone to reside with their uncle, Captain J. B. Nevitte, of Clermont Hall, Mississippi. Her mother and stepfather were sufficiently occupied in the care of their school, and of their young and growing family. After about fifteen months of suffering, Mrs. Southworth was glad to obtain, through the influence of the late Rev. William Matthews and others, the humble post of assistant-teacher in the public school of the Fourth District of Washington, where she continued at a small and insufficient salary for

Digitized by Google

about three years. It was in these dark days of the *woman's* life, that the *author's* life commenced; for up to this time her latent powers as a writer had not begun to be developed. And, though not unconscious of having a comprehensive intellect, she was quite unsuspicious of possessing creative genius. It was about Christmas that, one evening sitting by her small fireside and feeling lonely—her children having been put to sleep, and her little maid Mandy being absent at a prayer-meeting—Mrs. Southworth bethought herself of one of those old traditions of St. Mary's, recently revived and related to her by her mother, and wondered if the tale would not be equally interesting if written and printed. She knew that, at least she could write passably good English; and so, to beguile the tedium of her solitary evening fireside, and perhaps with a vague, faint hope of being able to augment her meagre income by writing for the press, she took writing materials and went to work, and wrote "The Irish Refugee," which she afterward sent to the nearest literary journal, "The Baltimore Saturday Visiter," the editor and proprietor of which was Doctor J. E. Snodgrass. She scarcely had a hope that this story would be accepted; yet had it been rejected, she says that she should never have had the heart to write another one—so broken in spirit, so despairing of life was she at this time. But the story was accepted and published, and a kind note from the editor encouraged the author to persevere. This little note was an epoch in her life. Under Divine Providence it decided her vocation. By inspiring hope, it gave her courage. She wrote and sent on her second story—"The Wife's Victory.'

Digitized by Google

About this time "The National Era" was established in Washington, and bought out "The Saturday Visiter." Mrs. Southworth's manuscript was placed at her disposal. She requested that it might be sent to the "Era," where it was afterward published, and followed in rapid succession by "The Wife's Mistake," "The Thunderbolt," and "Neighbor's Prescriptions." These stories were warmly commended to his readers by Doctor Bailey, the editor of the "Era," were extensively copied by his exchange list, and received with great favor everywhere. Up to this time she had written, from the fullness of her heart and brain, to please herself and friends—scarcely daring to hope that the day would ever come when her writings would bring her any thing more substantial than approbation.

But writing for "glory" alone was much too rich and costly a luxury for so poor a young mother to indulge in. The children's wardrobe wanted repairing, and so she laid aside the fascinating pen and took up the useful needle, and for months her evenings were passed in sewing.

Now came another marked day in Mrs. Southworth's life. It was the afternoon of a very tempestuous day, "when the snow and the sleet came down together," and she was waiting in the empty school-room, after hours, until her little maid Mandy should bring her the umbrella. Her spirits were deeply depressed, for the school funds were exhausted, her salary was unpaid, with the prospect of continuing so; winter was coming on, and there was nothing wherewith to meet its exigencies. While she was standing watching the driving tempest, and revolving these sad

Digitized by Google

matters, a carriage drove up to the door, and Dr. Bailey got out and came in, put in her hand a compensation for her past services, kindly told her that his readers missed her from the columns of the "Era", engaged from her another story, and then took leave and was gone almost before she could recover her surprise sufficiently to thank him. No one can imagine the joy with which this visit, just at this time, filled the heart of the young mother. She went home on "winged feet," her mind filled with thoughts of—*fame*, reader?—no, Heaven knows! but of little woolen socks and little flannel petticoats that could now be purchased for the children. That night she commenced "Sybil Brotherton, or the Temptation," a tale that was intended to be complete in one number, but that ran through seven numbers of the paper, and grew to the size of a novelette, thus forming the connecting link between the author's short stories and her novels.

The circumstances under which her first considerable work, "Retribution," was written, were as follows.

Near the close of the year she had been transferred from the post of assistant-teacher of the Fourth District School, to that of the principal of the new Primary School. The new school was first opened in the two largest rooms of her dwelling-house. It was while she was organizing her classes that the editor of the "Era" applied to her for another story, for the new year. She promised one that should go through two or three papers, and called up several subjects of a moral and philosophical nature, upon which the sad experiences of her life had led her to reflect, and from among

Digitized by Google

them selected that of moral retribution, as she understood it. She designed to illustrate the subject by a short story; but her brain and heart were teeming with thought and emotion, and the idea that had at first but glimmered faintly on her perceptions soon blazed into a perfect light, which, however, she says, being obscured by the imperfections of the medium, has not been transmitted to others with half the brightness with which it shone upon herself.

The conditions under which this her first novel was written, and the success that afterward attended its publication, is a signal instance of "sowing in tears and reaping in joy." For, in addition to her bitterest sorrow—her long life sorrow, she had many minor troubles. Her small salary was inadequate to the comfortable support of herself and children. Her school numbered eighty pupils, boys and girls, of which she had the sole unaided charge. Added to this, her little boy, Richmond, fell dangerously ill, and was confined to his bed in perfect helplessness until June. He would suffer no one to move him but his mother; in fact, no one else could do so without putting him in pain. Thus her time was passed between her housekeeping, her school keeping, her child's sick bed, and her literary labors. The time devoted to writing was that which should have been given to sleep or to fresh air. It was too much for her. It was too much for any human being. Her health broke down. She was attacked with cough and bleeding of the lungs. Still she persevered. She did her best by her house, her school, her sick child, and her publisher. Yet neither house, school, child or publisher, could possibly

Digitized by Google

receive full justice. The child suffered and complained, the patrons of the school grew dissatisfied, annoying and sometimes distressing the teacher; and as for the publisher, he was obliged to cancel whole pages of that manuscript, written amid grief, and pain, and toil of which he could know nothing. This was, indeed, the very melée of the "Battle of Life."

But see how it all ended. That night of storm and darkness passed at length, and morning dawned even for her; a bright, glad morning, ushering in a new and prosperous day of life. First in that tempest of trouble, her "great life-sorrow" had been swept away, or else she had been carried off from brooding over it. Next, her child, contrary to her own and the doctor's opinion, got well. Then, her book, written under so many difficulties, published besides in a newspaper, and being withal the first novel of an obscure author, was, contrary to all probabilities, accepted by the most eminent house in New York, and afterward republished in England, and noticed with favor even by the cautious English reviewers. New friends flocked around her. Offers for contributions to the literary journals of the day poured in upon her. One of them was made by Henry Peterson, of the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post, with whom she finally concluded an arrangement that lasted several years, to the satisfaction of both parties.

Much honor and praise is also due to Mr. T. B. Peterson, the popular Philadelphia publisher, for the enterprising and liberal manner in which he has placed Mrs. Southworth's works, in their handsome, uniform dress, before the

Digitized by Google

public. His reward has been in a large and extensive sale of the books.

In 1853 Mrs. Southworth took a cottage on the Potomac Heights, at the west end of Georgetown, where she has since resided with her children, writing industriously, and relieving her sedentary employment by frequent and extended rides and drives through the beautiful surrounding country, as well as by summer trips to the sea-side or the mountains, and autumnal visits to the Northern cities. During the winter her quiet retreat is visited by strangers from all parts of the country, whom the annual meeting of Congress brings to Washington.

Her works have been translated into French and German, and are republished in London, Paris, and Liepsic.

But the most profitable engagement that Mrs. Southworth has made, in the whole course of her literary career, is that recently effected with the munificent editor of the "New York Ledger."

T. H. Y.

Digitized by Google

THE HAUNTED HOMESTEAD.

There was so foul a rumor in the air,
The shadow of a Presence so atrocious.
How could a human creature revel there?
Even the most ferocious!—*Hood.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE HAUNTED HOMESTEAD.

A residence for woman, child, or man,
A dwelling-place—and yet no habitation;
A house, but under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication.—*Hood.*

In childhood I always had a fearless faith in *ghosts*. I desired before all sights to see them, and threw myself in the way of meeting them whenever and wherever there seemed the slightest possibility of so doing. Whenever there were mysterious sounds heard in the night, I listened with breathless interest, arose from the bed in silent eagerness, and went stealing on tiptoe through the dark house, in the hopes of meeting the ghosts. *Once* I met a severe blow on the nose from the sharp edge of an open door, and once a tom-cat, who made one spring from the top of the pantry shelves, upon my head, and another thence through a broken window pane. I would have liked to fancy him a ghostly cat, only I knew him too well for our own "Tom," the cunningest thief that ever run on four feet. Another time, perambulating through the house at midnight, I surprised a burglar, who mistaking me in the darkness for the master of the house, the watch, or an ambush, jumped straight over my head, (or past me, I hardly knew which in my astonishment,) and made his escape at the back door. But I must say that I never met a ghost, or even a "vestige" of a ghost until—but I think I will begin at the beginning and tell you the whole story.

At the Newton Academy where I was educated, among two hundred fellow pupils, I had but one bosom friend and

Digitized by Google

confidante—quite enough in all discretion for one individual, though you are aware that most young ladies have at least a dozen. My female Pythias was Mathilde Legare, a beautiful and warm hearted creole from New Orleans. Orestes and Pylades, Castor and Pollux, the Siamese twins, are but faint illustrations of the closeness of our friendship. To say that we were inseparable is nothing to the fact—we were united, blended, consolidated; and the one "angel" of Swedenborg formed of two congenial spirits, is the only sufficiently expressive example of our union of hearts. It was of little use for *me* to study a lesson, for though I had never looked at it, if Mathilde only committed *hers* to memory I was sure in some occult manner to have mine "at my fingers' ends"—or, on the other hand, if *I* studied, Mathilde might play,—she would recite her task just as well. Moreover, if I told a story Mathilde would swear to it, and *vice versa*. In short we two were in all cases "too many" for all the rest of the school, principal, assistants, masters and pupils! and we afforded a striking illustration of the truth of Robert Browning's lines—though I suppose the latter alluded to "a true marriage" and not a school-girl friendship:

> "If any two creatures grow into one
> They should do more than the world has done,
> By each apart ever so weak,
> Yet vainly thro' the world should you seek,
> For the knowledge and the might,
> Which in such union grew their right."

As Mathilde was rich and I was comparatively poor, this friendship brought me many advantages, among which was the privilege of annual travel and change of scene. About the first of every July, Mathilde's father and mother would leave their sugar plantation in Louisiana, and travel northward. They usually arrived at the Newton Academy about the tenth of the month, in time to be present at the

Digitized by Google

annual examination and exhibition of the pupils. Upon these occasions, Mathilde, who possessed quickness and vivacity, rather than depth or strength of mind, generally achieved a brilliant success; though she often told me that her triumph in being first at these mile-stones on the road to fame, was nothing more than the success of the swift-footed, careless hare over the slow and pains-taking tortoise who would win the race at the goal.

However this might be, Mr. and Mrs. Legare were equally proud of their daughter's genius and beauty, and to reward her "industry and application," as they called it, they took her each year to spend the long vacation of July and August, with them, in making a tour of the Virginia Springs; which are the most frequented by Southerners, for the convenience of bringing their servants with them.

Upon one occasion, however, that of the vacation preceding the last year of Mathilde's residence at school, Mr. Legare determined to vary their usual route by going to the northern watering-places of Saratoga and Ballstown. And, as usual, I, with the consent of my guardians, accompanied the party as their invited guest.

We arrived at Saratoga at the very height of the season. In all, I suppose that there might have been several thousand visitors at the springs. The United States Hotel at which we stopped was uncomfortably crowded. And though Mr. Legare grumbled in a very old-gentlemanly way, and Mrs. Legare wished herself at home again, Mathilde and I enjoyed the crowd for the crowd's sake, and experienced the truth of the popular adage of "the more the merrier."

At a place like *that*, even in the ball room, "*distinction*" was almost as impossible as it is said to be in London, where, now that *the* "Duke" is dead, no one is any one. Scarcely anybody was anybody at Saratoga that season. Many a village beauty, the toast of her own little circle,

Digitized by Google

and many a city belle, the queen of her own coterie, who went thither, reasonably expecting to make a "sensation," found herself and her claims to notice lost in a brilliant multitude all more or less expectant or disappointed.

I thought, Mathilde, with her tall and beautifully rounded form, stately head, pure olive complexion, shaded by jet black ringlets, and lighted up by laughing black eyes, bridged over with arch and flexible black eye-brows—would attract some attention.

Not a bit of it! Heiress and beauty as she was, Mathilde Legare was merely one in the crowd. There were hundreds with equal or greater claims to distinction. And so our beautiful Mathilde was not enthroned. Of course she soon attracted around her a circle of old and new acquaintances and had from them a due share of attention.

Among the first of these *new* acquaintances was a young gentleman of the name of Howard. His introduction to our party, without being romantic, was certainly marked by singularity. It occurred the third day after our arrival, at one of the weekly balls at the United States. It happened to be a fine, cool evening, and the assembly upon the occasion was unusually large. The saloon was quite crowded, leaving but little room for the motions of the dancers.

Mathilde was looking very beautiful that night. She wore a dress with a three fold skirt of very fine transparent thale over rose-colored silk, and which with every motion floated around her graceful form with a mist-like softness and lightness; a berthe and falls of the finest lace vailed her rounded arms and neck. She wore no jewels, but a wreath of rich white heliotrope crowned her jetty ringlets, and a bouquet of the same odoriferous flowers employed her slender fingers.

Yes! she was looking very lovely. Nevertheless, Mathilde as well as myself, seemed destined to adorn the sofa as a "wall flower" all the evening, for set after set formed

Digitized by Google

until every one was complete. The music struck up and the dancing commenced, and still no one came near us, nor did we even so much as see, within the range of our vision, one single person that we knew.

Mathilde voted this "the very stupidest ball" she was ever at, and hoped her papa would never come to Saratoga again.

I for my part fell into the study of faces, and through them into the study of character, and through that into dreaming.

Presently a head—start not gentle reader, there was a living body attached to it—attracted my particular attention—it was not because it was above every other head present—though had not this been the case I should not at that distance have seen it—nor was it because it was a very handsome one—for there were others much handsomer, but it was a very remarkable, characteristic, individual sort of head—a monarchial head, with a forehead that in its commanding height and breadth seemed the natural throne of intellectual sovereignty, with a strongly and clearly-marked nose and mouth, with eyes full of calm power—that surveyed the multitude below with the quiet interest of a king inspecting his army on some festive parade day

"Magnus Apollo!" were the words that sprang alive to my lips as I laid my hand upon the soft white arm of Mathilde and called her attention to this stranger.

"Hush! he is looking this way," said my companion, blushing and casting down her eyes.

I knew very well, if he was "looking this way," at *whom* he must be looking, and so, did not feel Mathilde's embarrassment in again raising *my* eyes to the "Magnus Apollo." When I did so I perceived that he was in conversation with another gentleman, whom I recognized as Mr. ——, the proprietor of the house. I saw Mr. —— bow and precede the stranger, conducting him to the presence of Mr. Le-

Digitized by Google

gare, to whom he immediately introduced him. I saw Mr. Legare and the stranger approaching our quarter of the room, and I thought I understood it all.

I was not mistaken.

Mr. Legare presented the stranger as "Mr. Howard of Boston," first to me, whom he favored with a bow, but certainly not with a single glance, and next to Mathilde whom he almost immediately petitioned to become his partner in the next quadrille.

Miss Legare bowed a gracious acceptance to his suit.

The presentation over, Mr. Legare went to rejoin his wife who could not endure to be left alone.

Mr. Howard remained standing before us, and soon by the brilliancy, variety, and interest of his conversation attracted and engaged both his hearers. He was certainly a man of the most distinguished and commanding presence that I had ever seen, and one for whom every hour's acquaintance increased our esteem.

When the new quadrille formed, with a graceful bow he extended his hand to Mathilde and led her to the head of one of the sets. He danced as well as he conversed. Why should I run into detail? Mathilde's fancy was captivated. They finished the quadrille, and for the remainder of the evening Mr. Howard's attentions, though very devoted, were marked by too much delicacy and good taste to attract notice from any one except her to whom they were directed.

The impression made upon Mathilde was as yet not sufficiently deep to render her reserved with me upon this subject. Consequently when the ball was over, and we had reached our double-bedded chamber, my friend broke forth in eager exclamations.

"Did you ever see such a fine-looking person, Agnes? and then his conversation! how brilliant! and how varied! how much he must have traveled! and then how well he dances!"

Digitized by Google

"Pshaw!" said I. "'Oh, what a fall was there,' 'from the sublime to the ridiculous!'"

"Yes, but he *does* dance well! and let me tell you that very few men can do so! *he* strikes the nice balance between *le grand* and *la frivole* in his manner! And then his name—Howard—*la crême de la crême* of aristocratic names. Don't you remember *Le Lion blanc* of the house of Howard?"

And so she rattled on, talking incessantly of the new acquaintance until we went to bed, and I went to sleep leaving her still talking.

The next morning, I noticed that Mathilde spent more than usual time and attention upon her toilette. She looked very pretty—when did she not?—in her embroidered cambric morning dress, with no ornament but her jetty ringlets flowing down each side her freshly-blooming face.

When we went down stairs, there was Mr. Howard waiting in the hall, to offer Mathilde his arm to the breakfast table.

Afterward at the ladies bowling-alley who but Mr. Howard stood at Mathilde's elbow to hand the balls? Who took her in to dinner? Who made a horse-block of his knee and a stepping-stone of the palm of his hand to lift Mathilde into her saddle? Who attended her in her afternoon ride? In her evening walk? In the duet with the piano accompaniment at night?

Howard—still Howard!

Until after several weeks of this association, at last papa opened his eyes and inquired first of himself and next of his host,

"*Who is* this Mr. Howard, who is paying such very particular attention to my daughter?"

"Mr. Howard, sir; Mr. Howard is a very talented young mechanic of Boston," answered the proprietor.

"A—what?" questioned the astonished old gentleman.

Digitized by Google

"A very accomplished young machinist, and mathematical instrument maker, sir, who has realized quite a handsome fortune by his patented improvement in—"

"The foul fiend!" exclaimed the old aristocratic, throwing up his hands in consternation, as he trotted off.

His daughter talking, dancing, riding, flirting with a mechanic! Oh! horror, horror, horror!

The result of this was, that after Mr. Legare's perturbed feelings had become somewhat calmed he called for his bill, settled it, took four places in the morning coach, ordered his servants to pack up, and the next day set out for the South.

He was very much disturbed; Mrs. Legare said nothing, but poor Mathilde was miserable, having been made to feel that she had unwittingly brought discredit upon herself and all her family.

Mr. Legare left Mathilde and myself at our school, and with his wife proceeded to Louisiana.

I soon saw that the warm-hearted young Southern maiden really was, or believed herself to be the subject of a deep and unhappy attachment; she became reserved to all, even to me, and her health suffered. As weeks grew into months her indisposition increased. One day her emotions broke the bounds of reserve, and throwing herself into my arms, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Agnes! if Frank would *only* write to me I should not feel so wretched!"

"Frank? who is Frank, my love?" I inquired in surprise, for I had never heard this name among our acquaintances.

She blushed deeply. "Oh! I mean Mr. Howard, you know! Frank Howard."

"No—I did not know! Has it come to this? and do you call him Frank? And do you, perhaps, correspond with him? Oh, Mathilde, Mathilde, my dear! take care!"

Digitized by Google

"Oh! no, no, I do not correspond with him! never have done so! he never even asked me! but after pa got so high with him, he looked mournful and dignified, and took leave of me! Oh! he *might* write to me."

"Mathilde, knowing your father's sentiments, he would not, as a man of honor, commence a correspondence with you. But tell me, dear, how far this affair had gone?"

"Oh! very far indeed; he was going to ask me of papa that very day we left!"

"Wait, Mathilde! you are so young! if this is any thing more serious than a passing fancy on both sides, he will delay until you leave school, and then he will first seek you at your father's house. This is the only course for a man of honor in such a case, you are aware."

"Um-m! little hope in seeking me at my father's house, with my father's estimate of a mechanic! But I do not the least believe that Frank Howard is a mechanic! He does not *look* like one!"

"Nonsense, my dear Mathilde! he is an intelligent Boston mechanic, who has made a valuable invention that has brought him a fortune; that is all about it."

Still Mathilde's health waned, and at last the principal of our Academy wrote to her parents, who came, and finding her condition more precarious than they had anticipated, removed her from school and carried her home. Mathilde could not bring against her friend the same charge that she had brought against her lover; for I requested a frequent correspondence, and faithfully kept up my part of it.

I remained at Newton for nearly twelve months after Mathilde had left.

And this time, passed in so great monotony by me, was full of event for Mathilde and those connected with her. In the first place, she accompanied her friends on a short

Digitized by Google

visit to Europe, and returning, entered society at New Orleans with some eclat.

Then followed for her father a succession of losses, one growing out of another, until his fortune was so reduced as to make it necessary for him to retrench and change his whole style of living.

Under such circumstances, his pride would not permit him to remain in that part of the country where for so many years he had lived *grand seigneur*.

His wife was a Virginian by birth and education, and in changing her home preferred to return to her native State. Therefore Mr. Legare purchased a small estate lying within a fertile gap of the Alleghanies, to which, in the spring of the next year, he removed his family.

Up to this time Mathilde had heard nothing directly from her Saratoga lover, but had learned, through the newspapers, that he had been nominated to represent his district in the National House of Representatives.

Hoping much from the two circumstances of her own reduction in worldly fortune and her lover's elevation in social rank, which must bring them nearer together in position, she had called the attention of her father to the announcement of Mr. Howard's nomination; but her fond expectations were soon dissipated by the old aristocrat's comment:

"Oh yes, my dear, I see! Any upstart can get into Congress now. Really a private station is the seat of honor; but the comfort remains that a patrician by birth, is still a patrician, no matter how low his worldly fortunes; a plebeian is still a plebeian, even though accident or caprice may constitute him a legislator."

"And now what shall I do, Agnes?" wrote Mathilde, after recounting these things.

"Hope! If Mr. Howard is as constant as you appear to be, you have every thing to expect from time and change ordered by Providence," was my written reply.

Digitized by Google

I finally left school at the commencement of the summer vacation following the spring in which Mr. Legare's family removed to their mountain home in Virginia.

It was just before the ensuing Christmas that I received an invitation from Mathilde to come up and spend the holidays with her at her father's new home.

In extending this invitation, she wrote: "I do not know, dear Agnes, how much or how little you may feel disposed to credit these modern, so-called *spiritual manifestations*, these 'rappings,' 'table-tippings,' etc., but I know your strong *penchant* for the supernatural and your inveterate habit of ghost-hunting, and I do assure you, if it will be any inducement for you to come to us, that our home contains as inexplicable a mystery as ever frightened human habitants away, and doomed a dwelling-place to desolation and decay, and this HAUNTING PRESENCE infests a house in a neighborhood, as yet innocent of spirit-rappings, table-tippings, and 'sich like diviltries,' as it is of railroads, steamboats and telegraph wires. But I shall say no more of this mystery until I see you 'face to face' except *this*, that even my unbelieving pa talks of selling the place unless the nuisance is explained and removed."

I think that it was the existence of this darkly-intimated spectre that fascinated me to the point of accepting Mathilde's invitation. Ghost-hunting was my one weakness—perhaps I should say monomania. I secretly hoped that there might be a haunted chamber in the old house and that they might put me to sleep in it; furthermore, that I might be favored with an interview with the ghost. I resolved to go. No persuasion had power to withhold me, no obstacle to prevent me. My only brother was expected home to spend Christmas, but I would not wait for him. I would, on the contrary, ask Mr. Legare to invite him to follow me. The weather was very severe, the snow covered the ground to the depth of two feet on a level, and what it might be

Digitized by Google

among the ravines of the mountains I was going to cross, I feared to conjecture: nevertheless to go I was determined.

It was a three days' and three nights' stage ride from Winchester, where I lived with my guardian, to Wolfbrake, the home of the Legares. Accordingly, in order to reach my journey's end on Christmas Eve, I set out from home on the twentieth of December, and after three days and nights of the roughest traveling, up hill and down, through the darkest forests, along the banks of the most frightful precipices, across the rudest and most primitive bridges thrown over the most awful chasms, through mountain streams so deep and rapid that in fording them it was often hard to tell whether we rode or rowed; finally, on the evening of the twenty-fourth, I reached Frost Height, where the mules from Wolfbrake, under the charge of Uncle Judah, already awaited me.

Although it was getting dusky, and the road down the snow-covered mountain path to Wolfbrake was not of the safest description, even by daylight, and might be considered dangerous by a starless night, yet Uncle Judah, with the hard-headedness of a favored old family servant, insisted that I should set forth immediately, as "Marse and Mis' would be 'spectin'" me to supper.

So, mounting my mule, and preceded by the old servant upon his jack, I descended into the outer darkness of the downward mountain path.

In a little while it was quite dark, and I could neither see Judah on his jack before me, nor even the narrow path under my feet. At every step I seemed to be plunging down into some dark abysm of shadows below shadows. I could not guide my course, but trusted to the habits and sure-footedness of the mountain mule that carried me. A glimmering light, shining up from the deepest depths of the darkness below, indicated the position of Wolfbrake

Digitized by Google

lodge. There was always a strange, mystic interest fell in approaching a place like that, for the first time, amid the shadows of night. The undefined, shapeless mass of buildings, the unseen boundaries, the unknown circumstances, that await us, all like some strange mystery, pique curiosity. And to these general subjects of interest, was added the particular one of the HAUNTING PRESENCE of which Mathilde had darkly written. I was yielding imagination up to the fascination of these dreamy speculations, when my mule, having reached the bottom, or else an obstacle of some sort—I could not in the deep darkness decide which—stopped short. And immediately I heard a sweet, familiar voice say:

"Is that you, uncle Judah? Did Agnes come?"

"Yes, honey," replied the old man; and—

"I am *here!* where are *you*, dear Mathilde?" exclaimed I, in the same instant.

"I am in the carryall! Uncle Judah, help your Miss Agnes off, and bring her in here with me."

In obedience, the old man lifted me out of my saddle, and, to use his own vernacular, "toted" me "through the slush," and set me in the carryall beside Mathilde. I could not see her form, but I felt her arms wound around me, and her lips against my face, searching for those other lips that quickly met hers, and then—

"I am *so* overjoyed to see you, dear Agnes! It was so good of you to come!" she said. "I couldn't wait! I had to order the carryall, and come to meet you at the foot of the hill."

We were then about a half a mile from the house. Mathilde made the boy that drove her, get down and give place on the driver's seat to Uncle Judah, and then take charge of the mules, to lead them home. And so we proceeded through the snow-covered bottom toward the house.

Digitized by Google

As I said, it was so dark that I could not clearly distinguish the outline of the buildings; but there appeared to be two houses, an old one and a new one joined by a covered piazza, and shaded by many trees.

We stopped before the door of the new house, from the parlor windows of which a stream of light from the lamps within was pouring.

We were met by Mrs. Legare, who gave me a cordial welcome, and took me at once to an upper front chamber, comfortably furnished, where a fine wood fire burned, and a kettle of hot water stood upon the hearth, for the convenience of warm ablutions.

"This is your room, my dear Agnes, where I hope you will find yourself at home," said my kind hostess.

I thanked her, but secretly hoped that she would leave me alone with Mathilde, to hear the mystery of the *haunting presence* explained, for as yet we had no opportunity of a *tête-à-tête.*

But the old lady lingered with motherly solicitude, until I had washed myself, and changed my traveling habit for a home dress; and then directing Jacinthe or "Jet," as she was nicknamed, to restore the room to order, she invited me down into the parlor.

As I left the chamber, I observed Jet's eyes start out like beads, and she made a motion to follow us; but a peremptory gesture from her mistress repelled her, and she remained, though evidently terrified at the idea of being left alone.

"Can it be possible," thought I, "that the child is afraid to stay by herself in the *new* house, when, of course, the supernatural inmate, if there *is* one, must be a denizen of the *old* one?"

And at the same time I experienced a feeling of disappointed love of adventure in being accommodated with a chamber so shining in freshness and so distant in character

Digitized by Google

as well as location from what I fancied must be the scene of the mystery.

When we reached the parlor, we found a party of young people collected to celebrate Christmas Eve. But scarcely were the introductions over, before a servant opened the door and announced supper—and, conducted by Mrs. Legare, we all went out by way of the hall and the covered piazza to the dining-room in the old house, where the feast was spread.

I cannot stop to analyze the sensations with which I crossed the threshold of this mystery-haunted house, and entered the quaint, old-fashioned parlor, where the supper table was set. The polished oak floor, the oak-paneled walls, the high, narrow, deep-set windows, the tall, black walnut chimney-piece over the broad fireplace, flanked by a high cupboard in one corner, and a coffin-like clock in the other—all whispered of those who had lived and died there long years before. There was a well spread and cheerfully lighted table, and a merry, youthful company assembled around it; but even these animating influences were not sufficiently powerful to exercise the thoughts of the DEAD—for, talkative and frolicksome though they were, their talk was still of the supernatural, of ghosts, and ghosts' seers. *I* did not talk—I was too earnestly interested in hearing. And I listened breathlessly to learn *the* mystery of the house. In vain! not a single allusion was made to a spectre in connection of Wolfbrake Lodge. They ignored the supposition. Perhaps they were *really* ignorant of it.

Supper over and cleared away, the young people returned no more that night to the parlor in the new house, but prepared for a game of "Snap-apple" in the old dining-room, which their romping could not hurt.

I was so weary with my three days and nights of riding, and so eager besides for a *tête-à-tête* with Mathilde, that I pleaded fatigue as an undeniable reason for retiring before

Digitized by Google

the games should commence. I hoped that Mathilde alone would attend me. Not so. Mrs. Legare, apparently watching for my withdrawal, joined her daughter and myself as we left the room, and accompanied us to the chamber set apart for my use in the new house. When we had reached this apartment, Mrs. Legare said—

"There is no one that sleeps in this house usually. We keep these chambers principally for the use of our guests. No one will occupy any room within it to-night except yourself, unless indeed you feel afraid——"

"*Afraid?*" repeated I, in a tone that quickly called forth an apology.

"Oh! I know, my dear Agnes, that you are no coward; but I did not know but that you might feel indisposed to sleep alone in a strange house."

"What? when it is a perfectly *new* house, Mrs. Legare? If, indeed, it were an old-time house, I might be afraid of the traditional ghost," said I, watching in her countenance the effect of my words—and seeing her, to my astonishment, turn pale, and send a quick significant glance to Mathilde, who averted her head.

"Ah!" thought I, "the old house is haunted! Would they would only let me sleep there, where there is some chance of being delightfully frightened."

"I was about to say, Agnes, that if you prefer, I will send one of the negro women to sleep on a mattrass in your room."

"By no means, Mrs. Legare. I shall fall asleep as soon as I touch my pillow, and not wake until morning—so I should not be able to appreciate the benefit of Peggy or Dinah's society.

"Very well, my dear, as you please. Here is a bell-rope at your bed's head—its wires run into the old house. If you should want any thing, ring."

I smiled, and assured my hostess that I wanted nothing

Digitized by Google

but sleep. Whereupon she called Mathilde, bade me good-night, and left the room. Turning back, however, she said to me:

"Agnes, my dear, lock your chamber door after us."

"Yes, madam."

"Excuse me, my dear; but young people are forgetful—especially when they are tired and sleepy. I think I should like to *hear* you lock it, Agnes."

There was something in her caution that struck me as very singular—but I laughed and went to the door, and after repeating my good-night, as desired, shut the door in their faces, and locked it.

"There! have you heard me lock the door?" I inquired.

"Yes, my dear—all right."

"And is your mind at rest on that score?"

"I am sure that you have attended to my advice. Good-night, and happy dreams."

Thanks, and the same good wishes! Good-night!" said I, in conclusion.

I listened, and heard them go down stairs, enter the parlor, and fasten the windows, and secure the safety of the fire there—go to the back hall door, and bolt and bar it—and finally go out by the front door, and lock it after them.

Fastened up as I was in the house, I did not feel myself quite in prison, because, should I, like Sterne's starling, want to "get out," I could do so by the back door.

Now, I never could account for it, but no sooner was I left alone in that room, resplendent as it was with newness, than a strange feeling of superstition came over me, that I could neither understand nor escape. It was in vain that I turned my eyes from the shining white wall and freshly painted and varnished doors and windows, to the cheerful pattern of the carpet and furniture drapery, and said that in this new and freshly-furnished chamber the supernatural was out of place—there grew upon me the impression of an

Digitized by Google

unearthly presence near; and the feeling, in spite of all probability, that this—*this* was the scene of the household mystery—this was THE HAUNTED CHAMBER!

In this new aspect I examined it. It was the least *like* one that could be imagined. It was a lofty, spacious, cheerful, double-bedded room, with four large windows—two on the east and two on the west side—with a fire-place in the south wall, and the heads of the beds, at some distance apart, against the north wall. Between the two east windows was a pretty dressing-table and glass; between the west windows was a neat washstand with a china service; on each side of the fireplace were two spacious clothes' closets; before the fire sat two easy chairs; in intermediate spaces around the walls were half a dozen other chairs.

I examined the clothes' closets, and found them entirely empty, and at the service of my dresses; then I looked under the bed; then beneath the drapery of the dressing-table; and finding nothing that should not be there, undressed myself, said my prayers, blew out my candle, and went to bed.

I could not sleep; my mind, my nerves, had for some reason become unusually excited; and, despite of extreme fatigue, I lay awake. I thought the room was too light; for, though the candle was extinguished, a glowing fire burned upon the hearth, a few yards from the foot of my bed, and the light of the now risen moon streamed into the east windows. After turning from side to side, vainly wooing slumber, I arose and went to close the east front windows. As I reached them with this purpose, I stayed my hand a moment, while I looked out at the snow-clad, moon-lit mountain landscape; below me was the bottom, bounded, not many furlongs off, by the cedar-grown precipice, down which, that very evening, I had come; under the shelter of that mountain, straight in the line of my

Digitized by Google

vision, lay the family graveyard of the former owner, in a copse of evergreens, where the spectral-looking tombstones gleamed whitely among the dark firs and cedars. Meditating upon those departed, I closed the blinds of the front windows, and then went to the back ones.

The latter looked straight down into the uncurtained windows of the lighted dining-room, where the young people were still at play. Above these windows, and directly opposite to mine, were those of Mrs. Legare's bedroom, now dimly lighted from the fire within.

With this proximity of the family, I felt less lonely, closed my blinds, and returned to bed.

Still I could not sleep. The fire on the hearth, beyond my bed's foot, flickered up and down, casting tall, spectral shadows, that danced upon the walls, or stretched their long arms over the ceiling. For hours I lay watching this phantasmagoria, until the fire died down, and the tall, dancing shadows sank into a mass of darknes, before sleep came to my wearied senses. But scarcely had I closed my eyes upon the natural world, before a strange vision, or dream, if you prefer to call it so, passed before me. Methought I heard the click of a turning key; I opened my eyes, and saw the door slowly swing back upon its hinges, and a lady of dark, majestic beauty, dressed in deep mourning, and having a pale and care-worn face, enter the chamber! Slowly and silently she walked to and fro, her footfall waking no echo—her progress attended by no sound, save the slight rustle of her silken robe! I was magnetized to watch her, as with clasped hands and wide-open, mournful eyes, she walked in silent, measured steps up and down the room. At length she paused in the middle of the floor, fixed her eyes upon mine with a wild and mournful gaze, slowly raised one hand from the breast upon which both had been tightly clasped, and with her spectral finger extended downward, *pointed to the spot beneath her feet*—

Digitized by Google

and then as slowly resumed her former attitude, and passed with measured steps from the room!

I tried to speak to her, to question her, but failed to utter a sound. In an agony of distress I tried to call out, and in the effort to do so awoke!—awoke to find that I had been dreaming.

But, reader! the door that I had locked so carefully the night before, was standing wide open, as when the dark woman of my dream had passed through it!

Day was dawning. I shivered, both from superstitious excitement, and from the cool draught of air blowing upon me from the open door. I drew the cover closely around me and listened; but no sounds except the undefined, low, pleasant murmur of awakening nature—the soft rustle of the pines in the up-springing morning breeze, the flutter of the night birds waking up in their branches, and the detonating echo of distant, louder noises were heard. I arose softly and opened the east window blinds, and then went back to bed to lie and watch the crimson light of morning kindling up the Orient.

An hour I lay thus, watching the dawn growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. And then I heard a key turned in the hall door, and some one come in and ascend the stairs. It was the little black maid Jet, come to make my fire. As she entered I saw her eyes grow wild, and she inquired.

"Miss Agnes, is yer been up Miss to open dis yer door?"

"I have been up this morning, Jet," said I, not wishing to let her into my full confidence. The answer seemed to set her at rest, for her countenance lost its wild terror, and she proceeded with cheerful alacrity to light the fire, fill the ewers and so forth.

Before she had got through with her task, there was a rush of many feet into the hall, and up the stairs, and

Digitized by Google

Mathilde and such of her young friends as were already up and dressed, bounded into the room, exclaiming—

"A merry Christmas! A merry Christmas! Agnes!"

Their arrival was enough to put to flight all the supernatural visitants that Hades ever sent forth. They hurried me with my toilet; they worried me to come down and see the Christmas tree, and get some egg-nog.

I was carried away with their gay excitement, and almost forgot my mysterious dream or *visitant*, but not quite; for all through the morning greetings of the family, the egg-nog drinking, the visit to the Christmas tree, the distribution of presents, the merry breakfast, the arrival of invited guests, the Christmas dinner-party, the afternoon sports, and the evening dance, I was possessed with the haunting presence of that dark, handsome woman, and her majestic woe.

We danced in the dining-room through all the Christmas night; and it was two o'clock in the morning before we separated.

Again, when I was about to retire, Mrs. Legare came to accompany me.

"I hope you rested well last night, my dear Agnes, though I have scarcely had an opportunity of asking you to to-day," she said, as we entered my room.

"I did not wake until dawn, Ma'am," I answered, evasively, for I had determined, since they let me into no confidence upon the subject of the household mystery, to keep my own counsel in regard to my dream and the open door.

"You slept until dawn. That is well. I hope you will have as good a rest for the few remaining hours of the night. Good-evening, my dear. Lock your door after me," said Mrs. Legare, going out with a look of relief and satisfaction.

As, upon the evening previous, I turned the key upon

Digitized by Google

my retiring hostess; listened until I heard her pass out and secure the hall door, then searched my room, undressed, said my prayers, and went to bed.

As I hinted in the beginning of this narrative, nature had made me at once superstitious and fearless. In the supernatural I "believed without trembling." And now alone, in this supposed-to-be haunted chamber, I lay with an interest devoid of uneasiness, waiting the development of events.

It was near day, when, overcome with watching, I fell asleep, and then, as upon the night previous, I had a vision or dream (as you please to call it). Methought the sound of a deep sigh awoke me, when looking up, I saw, standing in the middle of the room, the fearful woman of my dream, her finger pointed downward to the same spot, and still pointing thus, she receded backward until she disappeared through the open door.

I started up to call or stop her, and with the violence of my effort, awoke! awoke to see the morning light shining in through the shutters that I had neglected to close, and to hear little Jet letting herself in at the hall door, to come up and light my fire.

Again on entering and seeing the open door, she cast an uneasy, suspicious, frightened look around her, and said, "Yer allus gets up an' opens dis door when yer hears me a comin', don't yer, Miss Agnes, ma'am?"

"Yes, I heard you coming, Jet," I replied evasively, but the answer satisfied my simple little maid, who went cheerfully about her tasks.

As it was not early, I hastened to my toilet and descended to the dining room, not to keep my kind hostess waiting breakfast.

They were all ready to sit down when I joined them, and we immediately took our seats at the table.

Upon my plate I found a letter from my brother, which

Digitized by Google

I asked and obtained permission to open and read. It was a regretful refusal of my invitation to him to join me at Wolfbrake to spend the holidays, upon the ground that he had brought home with him a friend whom he could not leave.

"Pooh! pooh! let him bring his friend along! Tell him so! Any friend of your brother will be welcome here, Agnes!" said Mr. Legare, to whom I communicated the contents of my letter.

I acted upon this permission, and wrote for my brother to come and bring his friend. After I had finished and dispatched my letter, I joined a party who were going out to dine. The dinner was followed by a dance, and the dance by a moonlight sleigh-ride home. But through all the excitements of the day, the image of the dark woman haunted my mind. And again it was very late when I retired to bed.

As usual, Mrs. Legare and Mathilde saw me to my room, and, as before, I locked the door behind them, and listened until I heard them leave the house and secure the hall entrance. Then I hastened my preparations, got into bed, and thoroughly worn out with fatigue and loss of rest, soon fell into a deep sleep. And a third time the dream or vision passed before me. Methought I was awakened by a voice calling my name. I opened my eyes, and saw—first the door stretched wide open, and then, standing in the middle of the floor, the beautiful and majestic woman of my former visions, but this time more sad and stern in aspect than before. Fixing those wild, mournful eyes upon mine, and holding my gaze as it were by a mesmeric spell, she slowly and severely pointed to the spot beneath her feet, and saying, as it were, "Look!" passed in measured steps from the room.

Once more in an agony I started up to call and stay her, but with the effort awoke. The door that I had carefully

Digitized by Google

locked, stood wide open as before. It was the same hour as that of my awakening upon the two previous mornings. The day was flushing redly up the eastern horizon beyond the mountains, and nature was awakening everywhere.

I could not now so readily shake off the influence of my dream. There was something that I wished to ascertain before my little maid should interrupt me; the reiterated gesture by the woman of my dream, determined me to examine the spot upon which she had stood and pointed, to see if, really, her action had any meaning. So I arose from my bed, and, first securing the door, and turning the key straight in the lock, that my little maid, should she come, might not spy my doings, I removed the hearth-rug, took a pair of strong scissors and drew out the tacks, turned up the carpet.

Reader! I had an attraction to the supernatural, but a mortal antagonism to the horrible, and nearly swooned on seeing the spot to which the dark woman of my vision had pointed, deeply marked with a sanguine-crimson stain! The very heart in my bosom seemed frozen with horror, and I felt myself, as it were, turning to stone, when a loud knocking at my chamber door aroused me. It was my little maid, whose coming, I, in my deep and fearful abstractions, had not heard. I hurriedly replaced the carpet and the rug, and went and opened the door.

"Yer sleeped soun' dis mornin,' Miss Agnes, ma'am," said little Jet, smiling as she entered. "I feared I scared you out'n your dream," she added, noticing, I suppose, my horror-stricken face.

"You certainly startled me, Jet," I said, evasively. And while she lighted the fire, I returned to bed to try to compose my nerves.

Between the horror I felt at the idea of sleeping another night alone in an accursed room, where, it seemed, a crime had been committed, and my intense desire to elucidate the

Digitized by Google

mystery, I was at a loss how to act. Only one thing I decided upon: to keep my own counsel for the present.

"De fire is burnin' fus-rate now Miss Agnes, so you can get up an' dress, if you likes, as break'as' is mos' ready," said my little attendant. And taking her hint, I arose and hastened my toilet, in order to be punctual at the morning meal of my hostess.

As I descended the stairs, I heard Mrs. Legare speaking to her daughter in the parlor, where a fire was kindled every morning while there were visitors in the house. She was saying:

"I tell you, Mathilde, it is all a delusion. Those who have never heard the story, never see, or hear, or fancy any thing unusual: you know now Agnes has not been disturbed, and it is because she has heard nothing. Whereas, if you had told her this history, she would have imagined, Heaven knows what! all sorts of horrors! that is the reason I wished her to hear nothing of it. She has slept undisturbed in that room. Let that be known. Others will then not object to do so, and the report will die out."

She spoke in a quick, low tone, and seeing me coming, instantly changed the subject. But my sense of hearing, always acute, was quickened by intense interest, and I had heard more than she could have wished me to know. She turned to me with a smile, and said:

"I hope that you have rested well, my dear Agnes."

I said, "As well as usual," and receiving Mathilde's morning kiss, took her arm, and accompanied them into the breakfast-room.

It was some hours after breakfast, that day, when I went up into my chamber to write letters. While thus engaged, I heard Mathilde coming up, singing, and enter a chamber corresponding to mine, but separated from it by the front hall.

"Are you there, Agnes?" she asked.

Digitized by Google

"Yes, dear: shall I come to you?"

"*Si vous plait, Mademoiselle,*" she answered, gayly.

I went into the room, where I found Mathilde directing Jet in her work of preparing the chamber for guests.

"I shall have to put your brother and his friend here together to sleep, my dear Agnes, as we are so full. But by the way, who is his friend?"

"That is just what I cannot tell you. John, in his wild, careless way, simply said that he had a friend with him, as a reason why he could not at once accept your father's invitation, and Mr. Legare as carelessly and frankly wrote back for him to bring his 'friend' along with him."

Eh bien! cette l'ami inconnu must be content to lodge with John: we can do no better."

"Since your house is not so large as your heart, *chere Mathilde.*"

Little Jet was engaged in removing the fire-screen, preparatory to lighting the fire to air the room. As she set this board down before my eyes, I could scarcely repress the cry that arose to my lips. It was an old, faded family portrait that had been put to this use. That was not much: but—*it was the portrait of the dark woman of my dream.*

The same midnight eyes and hair, the same proud, stern, sad brow!

"Whose likeness is that, Mathilde?" I asked when I had in some degree recovered my composure.

"Oh! I don't know, it is a portrait of some member of the family of the former proprietors, I suppose! We found it here with other rubbish, considered, I suppose, of too little value to remove, after the Van Der Vaughans left; I washed its face and set it up for a fire-screen, 'to such vile uses,' etc. By the way, look at it! It is a very remarkable countenance! Such expression might have been that of Semiramis when ordering the execution of Ninus."

Digitized by Google

"No! I do not think so, there is no wickedness in this face! There is strength, sternness, perhaps cruelty (if necessary)," I replied, still studying the portrait; "Who could it have been?"

"I know not indeed! some old, old member of the Vaughan family."

"Nay, I do not think the portrait is of such ancient date! to be sure it is dilapidated; but that seems to be more from abuse than from time. And observe! the costume is modern."

"So it is!"

"I had not thought of that before! Well now since you have said so, I begin to surmise that this *may* be the portrait of Madeliene Van Der Vaughan."

"And who was she?" I inquired with as much indifference as I could assume.

"Oh! the last lineal descendant of the elder branch of the family and the last heiress of this old estate; she married her first cousin Wolfang Van Der Vaughan."

"And what was her history and her fate?" I inquired, striving to restrain the betrayal of the intense interest I felt.

"Oh, her history was as painful as her fate was tragic."

"And—well?"

"Hush! there is some one coming! I will tell you another time!"

It was Mrs. Legare who entered, and smiling a sort of salutation to me, and opening a letter she held in her hand, said,

"My dear Mathilde we are to have more company. Your cousin Rachel Noales is coming; she will be here this afternoon!"

"Oh! I should be so glad if we only had room for her!" exclaimed Mathilde impulsively, and then she blushed

Digitized by Google

deeply in having spoken thus freely of their crowded state in the presence of a guest.

"My dear Mathilde," said I, "as mine is a double-bedded chamber, I should be very happy to have Miss Rachel for a room-mate; that is, if it would be agreeable to herself."

"Thank you, Agnes, dear. Agreeable! why it would be the very thing. Rachel Noales is the greatest coward that ever ran! and would no more sleep in a strange room, by herself, than she would in a church-yard! If you had not kindly offered, some of us girls would have to take her in, although we are all sleeping double now!"

"But are you sure, my dear Agnes, that you will not be incommoded," kindly inquired Mrs. Legare.

"Incommoded? not in the least! the arrangement suits me to a nicety!" I replied.

And so in truth it did; for let me confess, that while I could not prevail upon myself to shorten my visit, and leave the house with its great mystery unsolved, the prospect of sleeping alone in that chamber cursed with crime appalled me; but in company with a companion of my own age, it would be a very different affair.

"That horrid portrait! take it into the attic, Jet," said Mrs. Legare, as her eyes fell upon the *ci devant* fire-screen.

The little maid took up the picture and carried it off as commanded.

Then there was a visit of inspection and preparation paid to my room. Fresh sheets and more blankets were put upon the second bed, fresh napkins laid, and then mother, and daughter, and little maid departed.

Through the remainder of that day I had no further opportunity of learning from Mathilde the history of the dark lady.

Late that afternoon Uncle Judah was dispatched with the mules to Frost Height to meet the stage-coach, and bring Rachel Noales to the house. And about seven o'clock he

Digitized by Google

returned, escorting the new visiter, for whom we were waiting tea.

As Miss Noales was to be my room-mate, I examined her with much more interest than I had bestowed upon any other among my fellow-visitors. Rachel Noales was an orphan, and was still in deep mourning for her father, who had been dead about nine months. She was a very pretty, timid-looking girl, with a fair face, soft brown hair and large hazel eyes.

"Ah! my dear child," I thought to myself, "you are scarcely the most proper denizen for a crime-cursed, haunted chamber."

And I made up my mind to protect her, if possible, from the knowledge that would only make her wretched, and perhaps drive her away from the place. As this was the fourth evening of Christmas revelry, and we had all been up to a very late hour upon each of the three preceding nights, it was moved, seconded, and carried by a large majority that we should retire early on this and the succeeding evenings of the week, so as to recruit a little for the New Year's festivity.

Accordingly, at ten o'clock we separated.

Mrs. Legare and Mathilde accompanied Rachel Noales and myself to our chamber. And when our hostess and her daughter had seen that the room was in perfect order, the fire burning well, the beds turned down, the ewers filled, etc., etc., they took leave, waiting as before, until they had heard me lock the chamber door behind them. When they had passed down the stairs and out at the hall door and locked it after them, I turned around to meet the surprised look of Rachel Noales.

"Why, where have they gone?" she asked.

"Into the old house, to bed."

"Why!—do they *sleep* there?"

"Certainly—the whole family sleep there."

Digitized by Google

"And who sleeps *here* in the new house?"

"No one but you and I!"

"You don't mean to say that they have put us in this house to sleep alone?"

"Why not? It is an adjunct to the other house, which is besides quite full of guests. It was so when I came."

"And where did you sleep?"

"Here."

"Alone!"

"Certainly."

She looked at me with astonishment. And had my mind been sufficiently at ease I should have enjoyed her naive admiration. But it was not so; and when I saw her draw her chair up in front of the fire, and sit down immediately over that spot, I shuddered and spoke to her.

"Rachel, dear, don't sit directly in front of the fire, it is injurious to the eyes."

She moved to one side and began to unfasten her dress preparatory to going to bed. We were now ready. But before lying down Rachel asked me—

"Is the door secure?"

"Yes, my dear."

"And the windows?"

"Yes."

Not quite content with my answer, Rachel went slyly around to all the windows, and then to the door, to ascertain their security; then she searched the closets, and finally got into bed.

I soon followed her example, but found myself more sleepless than upon the preceding evening. I know not exactly how long I had lain awake, thinking of the dead proprietors, of Madeliene Van Der Vaughan, and her sad history and tragic fate, (whatever that might have been,) and of the stern, dark woman of my dream, and of the blood-stained floor, and trying to combine these materials

Digitized by Google

into some coherent whole, when suddenly I heard the lock click back, the door swing slowly open, and a rustle, as of silken drapery, and I opened my eyes to behold the awful woman of my dream standing in the middle of the room, and pointing sternly to the blood-stained floor!

And in the very same instant that I heard and saw this, Rachel had also been awakened, and was even now asking in frightened tones,

"Who is that?"

But there was no answer.

"Who is *that?*" again asked the girl.

And still there was no answer.

"Who—*is*—*that?*" she reiterated emphatically

No answer.

"Aunt Legare!—Mathilde!—Jet!—*Who is it?*"

No reply. But the tall, black-robed woman standing motionless, and pointing with spectral finger to the spot on the floor!

"Oh! dear me! Agnes, Agnes!"

I answered—

"What, my dear?"

"Have you opened the door?"

"No, love."

"Have you been up at all since you laid down?"

"No, Rachel."

"Who opened the door?"

"I do not know."

"Didn't you *hear* it open?"

"Yes."

"And it is open now!"

"I see it is."

"But *how came* it open?"

"I do not know: perhaps it was not quite locked, and the ketch flew back."

"Oh, perhaps that was it!" said Rachel; and, though

Digitized by Google

her teeth were chattering with a nervous tremor, she got out of bed, and went to the door, to close and lock it. And, reader! *the black-robed woman passed out before her, and she saw her not.*"

I fell back upon my pillow, nearer swooning than ever I had been in my life; for now I knew that *this was no dream, but a vision—an apparition to me, and to me only.*

I slept no more that night.

And in the morning when I arose, and looked into the glass, I was startled at the haggardness of my own face.

When we appeared at the breakfast table, some of the young people remarked my paleness, and said that I had been frolicking more than was good for me. Then one of the company inquired of Rachel Noales how *she* had rested.

"Not very well," Rachel answered; "I was frightened by the door flying open in the middle of the night."

I noticed a quick, intelligent look pass between Mathilde and her mother, while Rachel continued—

"I thought at first that it was thieves breaking in; but I know now that it flew open because Agnes had not locked the door fast enough to hold it."

"No, I had not," said I.

The arrival of the mail-bag put an end to this discussion. The letters were distributed at the table. Among them was one from my brother to Mr. Legare, accepting his invitation for himself and his friend, whom he begged to name as the Honorable Francis Howard, of Massachusetts, and announcing the letter as a mere *avant courier* of the party which would reach Frost Height that afternoon.

Upon hearing the name of Frank Howard as the "friend" of John and their expected guest, Mathilde flushed and paled, and was quite unable to conceal from the interested scrutiny of her parents the emotion these tidings caused her.

Digitized by Google

As for Mr. Legare, upon reading his name, he said: "Humph!" and "humph!" very emphatically, several times, before he could get any further. But he considered his hospitality implicated; nay, his honor pledged to receive and treat with politeness the guest that he had so unconsciously invited. He was a fine old gentleman, notwithstanding his prejudices—was Mr. Legare.

So, in the afternoon, once more Uncle Judah was ordered to take the mules and go up to Frost Height to meet the stage-coach, and bring two visitors to the house: an order so little to the old man's satisfaction that he vented his disapprobation in the exclamation:

"Ole Masse better had set up 'Entertainment for Man and Beast' at once."

As usual, when expecting a new arrival of visitors, Mrs. Legare put back her tea hour, and prepared a supper of extra luxuriousness. And Mr. Legare brewed the great ancestral punch-bowl to the brim with rich, frothy egg-nogg, and set it away to "mellow," against the coming of the gentlemen.

"My dear mother and father! they have noble hearts in spite of their social conservatism! And you shall see that they will treat my Frank with as much kindness and respect as if they did not consider him a sort of wolf, prowling about after their one ewe lamb," said Mathilde, with tears of affection brimming to her eyes.

"And you see, my darling, it is as I foretold you it would be. He is seeking you now in your own home. And under what favorable circumstances—the invited guest of your father. How very providential the whole train of events! Trust still in Divine Providence: and if your love is a *true* love, it will end happily," I answered.

And in my deep sympathy with Mathilde's joy, I almost forgot that I was a haunted maiden, with some, as yet unknown, supernatural mission to accomplish.

Digitized by Google

I was resolved, if possible, before the day should be over, to hear from Mathilde the tragic story of Madeleine Van der Vaughan, whose portrait I had mentally identified as that of the awful visitant of my midnight hours. The opportunity came, or rather, I made it. Mathilde had early completed her toilet for the evening. I had done likewise. And at five o'clock we found ourselves alone together in the drawing-room of the new house. The lamps were not as yet lighted. The hickory fire had ceased to blaze, and now only burned redly, showing out a strong, solid heat, in what Uncle Judah called "solemn columns," and casting over the dark chamber a sombre, ruddy twilight. We sat down by the fire together. There would be no chance for the next half hour of being interrupted.

For Mr. Legare was still engaged at his breakfast in the dining-room. Mrs. Legare was busy in her pantry and the kitchen, and the few servants of the now reduced establishment were in constant attendance upon their master or mistress.

Rachel Noales was up stairs in my chamber, dressing for the evening, and the other young persons of the Christmas party were in the bed-rooms of the old house, similarly engaged.

There was not the slightest possibility of an interruption.

Mathilde commenced speaking.

"I believe you are pleased with your chamber, Agnes?"

"*Charmed*," I answered.

Without perceiving the *double entendre* hidden in my reply, she said:

"And you have always slept well, then?"

"Never better," I replied: "*in that chamber*," I mentally added.

In her ignorance of this silent reservation, she was pleased with my answer, and sat smiling quietly and study-

Digitized by Google

ing, apparently, the glowing coals of fire in the chimney-place.

I broke her reverie by saying, in a careless, off-hand way:

"*Apropos de rien*, you have not told me the story of that mysterious portrait yet."

"No I haven't! But, indeed, I am not sure that the history of Madeleine Van Der Vaughan has any thing to do with *that* portrait, since I am not sure that it is hers."

"No matter: take it for granted that it is; or at least tell the story whether or not."

"Very well: listen then," said Mathilde, settling herself comfortably in her chair, and commencing the narrative.

"The Van Der Vaughans, as you may perceive by their name, are of Teutonic origin, though by frequent intermarriage with other races, they have no doubt lost, or modified, many of their national traits. Their residence, in this part of the country, dates back to the time of the first settlement of New York by the Dutch.

"Why this particular family should have wandered down to the back-woods and mountains of Virginia remains a mystery, unless they were of a patriotic and poetical turn, and found in her wild hills and boundless woods something to remind them of the Hartz Mountains and the Black Forest. However that may be, they came, took up a great tract of land, built themselves a dwelling-place (the old house adjoining this), and settled down permanently.

"For a time they were prosperous, as others were, and then, by bad agriculture, they grew poor, as others in this neighborhood did. If we may believe tradition, the poorer this family grew the prouder they became, until at last, pride and poverty united, culminated in the character and the circumstances of the last heiress of the elder branch of the family, *Madeleine Van Der Vaughan*.

"At the age of twenty-five, Madeleine Van Der Vaughan

Digitized by Google

was left, by the death of her father (her mother died long before), sole heiress of a worn-out plantation and dilapidated house.

"Madeleine is reported to have possessed great and singular beauty—a tall and imperial form, a fine head, with strongly marked and perfectly regular features, a deep, rich complexion, and hair, eyes and eyebrows all black as Erebus. Gifted and accomplished was she also, and, as I stated, proud as Lucifer. It is said that this overweening pride prevented her taking a husband from among her numerous visitors, none of whom, though of the best families in the State, she deemed worthy of her own 'high alliance.'

"Until at last her relative, Ernest Wolfgang Van Der Vaughan, made his appearance in her train and claimed her hand; a claim that was endorsed by her acceptance.

"It is said that family pride had to do with this marriage much more than love. However that might be, no sooner was the knot securely tied, than Mr. Van Der Vaughan began to importune his wife to sell her land and homestead that they might emigrate to the West. But in vain; for Mrs. Van Der Vaughan would not, for an instant, entertain the idea of alienating her patrimony.

"On the contrary, she had one ambition concerning her inheritance—an ambition that reached the height of a ruling passion—and that was, to resuscitate the dead soil of the plantation and to rebuild the mansion house.

"All Ernest Van Der Vaughan's property consisted in bank stock. All Madeleine's estate was in worthless land and negroes. But she offered him, as she would not have offered any other than a Van Der Vaughan, the fee simple of her plantation, if he would only devote his money to the restoring of the worn-out fields and the rebuilding of the homestead.

"Ernest did not like the plan, and he told her so. He

Digitized by Google

explained to her how, at one-tenth the outlay that he should have to make for manures and for labor to resuscitate this effete soil, he would go to Iowa and purchase a large farm of the richest land and build a comfortable dwelling-house and all needful offices around it.

"But it was in vain that he argued with her. She was a strong-minded, self-willed woman, with one idea—one monomania—love for 'Old Virginia,' and especially for her own portion of the soil. She absolutely rejected the plan of emigration, and told Ernest, in the most decided manner, that, go where he might, she never would desert her birth-place.

"She was the stronger of the two, and she prevailed. Ernest embarked nearly all his means in the doubtful enterprise of restoring the old worn-out fields and rebuilding the mansion, or rather, I should say, repairing it, and building a new house beside it.

"Madeleine, on her part, kept her word. She executed a deed conveying the whole property to her husband. And after he, in a fit of generous abandonment, tore that deed and threw it in the fire; she made a second one, caused it to be recorded, and thus rendered it irrevocable, before she told him any thing about it.

"She went even further than this, and aided him in every possible way in his work of restoration. To retrench expenses, so that every spare dollar should go to that enterprise, she discharged her housekeeper, reduced her establishment of servants, and took upon her own shoulders the additional burthens lately borne by those whom she had discharged from service. She worked hard and constantly. No one knew how severely she toiled—not even her husband, until her labors seriously affected her health. Then Ernest Van Der Vaughan remonstrated. But she smiled and pointed to the growing fields and to the rising mansion.

Digitized by Google

"Yet the restoration of the lands and the elevation of the house was a work of years. Often progress was arrested by the want of funds, and then, though it cost the mistress many severe heart pangs, one after another of the old family servants were sold to raise the necessary amount, and their places in the field had to be supplied by fresh drafts upon the small household establishment, until at last the mistress was reduced to one maid of all work, about her person.

"I do not think that your citizens, Agnes, dream of how much labor devolves upon the mistress of a large plantation, in circumstances such as these. Even when assisted by an efficient housekeeper, and many well-trained servants, the duties are onerous, sometimes oppressive. Madeleine Van Der Vaughan had deprived herself of nearly all help; but most willingly she bore her self-assumed burthen, only showing distress when some financial exigency compelled her to wound humanity. She gave her heart, her life to one object of her ambition. Yes—literally, this was so; for it was observable that *as the carefully tended land recovered, she lost vitality, and as the mansion arose, she sank.*

"It was in glorious autumn, when the richest wheat harvest that had ever been reaped in the State was gathered into the barns of Wolfbrake, and the finest corn crop that had ever grown in the valley, stood ripe in the fields, that the house was finished.

"So much money had been spent and so many debts remained to be paid, that there was but little to expend upon furniture, and Mrs. Van Der Vaughan could not appoint her house in a style so gorgeous as would have satisfied her ambition. However, it was furnished in the manner that you now see, which, after all, is much handsomer than anything that was known to the grand old Van Der Vaughans in their grandest days of, no doubt, *fabulous* grandeur.

Digitized by Google

"It was about the first of November that the last of the Van Der Vaughans removed into this house.

"The plastering of the sleeping rooms was not so well dried as had been supposed. This was soon ascertained by Mr. Van Der Vaughan, who advised and entreated his wife to delay the removal.

"But when had Madeleine Van Der Vaughan yielded to any will but her own? With the impatience and fever of a long desire, she hastened to take possession of her new residence.

"Although the weather had continued fine, with westerly or southerly winds, up to the day of removal, yet then the wind shifted to the east, blowing up masses of dark clouds and cold mists, followed by rain and even sleet.

"Alas! worn out by self-assumed, unnecessary burthens, Madeleine Van Der Vaughan was in no good condition successfully to meet a change of weather and other circumstances. Moreover, she, so earnest in her ambition, so zealous for ostentation, was fatally careless in regard to her own personal comforts. There was no grate or stove in her chamber, or in any other room in her house; all depended upon open fire-places, which, however handsome, cheerful and poetic they may look, are not always just the very best things for damp houses in severe weather.

"Mrs. Van Der Vaughan's chamber could not be properly dried and heated. The consequence was, that she took a severe cold, which fell upon her lungs, and from which she, in her enfeebled state, had not power to recover. She dropped into a rapid consumption, and in six weeks from her triumphal entrée into her new house, she was borne thence to the family burial-ground, that you may see from your windows."

"Poor lady! What room did she occupy?"

"Yours."

"And—she died there?"

Digitized by Google

"Yes; she died there, a victim, I am sure, of her own impatient, feverish ambition."

"Do not judge her harshly."

"I do not. This is the reputation she has left behind her."

Yet it may not have been her true character. Reputation is one thing, character is another," said I, falling into thought, and then reflecting that much yet must remain to be told, to give me a sure clue to the household mystery.

"Well, what else?" I inquired.

"What else, my dear? why, nothing else. I have told you all her story to her death," said Mathilde, uneasily.

"But after all," said I; "one of the most interesting things in the connection, is your father's purchase of this fine property."

"Ah, true! Well, after the death of his lady, Ernest Van Der Vaughan removed back into the old house and closed up the new one. In the course of a few weeks, he advertised the property for sale, but months passed and no purchaser appeared willing to give him the price set upon the estate.

"A year went by, and Mr. Van Der Vaughan made the acquaintance of a young lady, Alice Brightwell, who was, it is said, as strong a contrast as possible to his late wife; for Alice was young, and fair and gay, loved music, dancing and company, and had not a regret, a care, or an ambition in the world.

"It must have been the attraction of antagonism that united the hearts of this dark and sombre man of thirty, and this laughing, careless girl of nineteen, for it is said that they were greatly attached to each other.

"At all events, after a brief courtship, and a briefer engagement, they were married; and when Mr. Van Der Vaughan proposed to *her* as he had to his first wife, that they should emigrate to the West, she, in her gay, adventurous love of novelty, eagerly assented, notwithstanding

Digitized by Google

that to go with him thither, she must leave her parents, brothers and sisters.

"Once more the property came into market, and my father seeing the advertisement and desiring to remove to Virginia, opened a correspondence with the proprietor, then made a visit of inspection, and finally became the purchaser of the estates.

"When the transfer was about to be made, my father, pointing to the family grave-yard, inquired of Mr. Van Der Vaughan, whether he did not feel an unwillingness to sell that piece of ground, and told him that he might readily make an exception of that plot, and retain it in his own right.

"But Mr. Van Der Vaughan replied that he did not really care to own a foot of ground on the estate.

"My father then told him that if he would like to retain the grave-yard, it should make no difference in price of the whole already agreed upon—for my father, you see, Alice, felt a sort of hesitation in buying the place without exempting the bones of the old family from the purchase.

"But Mr. Van Der Vaughan had no scruples of the sort.

"'No,' he said, 'Mr. Legare, if I were to retain possession of the grave-yard, I and my heirs after me, would own an acre of ground in the very midst of your estate, which, as it stands now, might make no difference, as I shall never return to claim it, and could make no use of it if I did; but which might embarrass you very much should you ever wish to sell the property.'

"That was good reasoning enough, I suppose, and, at all events, the sale was completed without the exception.

"We moved into the house, and Mr. Van Der Vaughan and his bride departed for Kansas."

"And he really, when he might just as easily have avoided it, sold the bones of his wife and her ancestors to a stranger!"

Digitized by Google

"Even so, my dear Agnes, and believe me, that we all *felt* as much shocked as you *look*."

"But," said I, fixing my eyes upon her face, where the flickering fire-light made the shadows play—"*the stranger has not been able to retain the peaceable possession of his purchase!*"

"What—what mean you, Agnes!" exclaimed Mathilde, in alarm.

"I mean that *the late proud lady of Wolfbrake still carries the keys, and unlocks doors at will!*"

"Heavens! do you know that?"

"Aye! I know much *more* than that. I know the portrait that performed the humiliating office of fire-screen in the next room, is the likeness of the haughty Madeleine Van Der Vaughan! I know, besides——"

"*What* more do you know?"

"That our travelers have arrived!" I said, as the sound of footsteps and voices at the hall door fell upon my ear.

It was true. We were interrupted.

As if "borne on the wings of love," the slow old stage coach was so much earlier that evening, that our friends arrived an hour sooner than we had expected them, while Mrs. Legare was still superintending the arrangement of her supper table, and Mr. Legare was grating nutmeg over his huge bowl of egg-nog, so there was no one to welcome the visitors, except Mathilde and myself.

As they entered the parlor, we arose and advanced to meet them.

"Mathilde! Miss Legare! Can it be possible! This is indeed, indeed, a joyful surprise," exclaimed Frank Howard, as he recognized his lady love, and with an eager smile extended his hand: while my brother, without ceremony, embraced me cordially.

"I thought you knew to whom you were coming," said Mathilde, with simple candor.

Digitized by Google

"No! I scarcely dared to hope for such happiness!"

"Hey-day! Hal-loe!—do *you* know any body here, Frank?" exclaimed my wild and thoughtless brother.

But before Mr. Howard had time to answer, I pinched Jack's arm, turned him around, and presented him to Miss Legare.

The refined and elegant presence of Mathilde immediately brought my rude cadet to order, and he gracefully expressed the pleasure and honor he felt in being permitted to make her acquaintance.

Miss Legare welcomed my brother with more cordiality than she had bestowed upon her lover.

And I turned to receive Frank Howard's offered hand, and respond to his expressions of satisfaction at the present opportunity of renewing our acquaintance.

When these rather common-place ceremonies were over, Miss Legare invited her guests to be seated, and we resumed our chairs. A deep blush settled upon the beautiful face of Mathilde.

But whatever might have been the emotions of Mr. Howard, he suppressed them through that regnant self-control that ever distinguished his manners. And he was the first to perceive the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Legare, and to arise and advance to receive them.

My brother presented Mr. Howard to Mr. Legare, who received him with cordial politeness, and in his turn introduced him to Mrs. Legare, who smilingly welcomed him to Virginia.

Certainly Howard had nothing to complain of in his reception. There was not the slightest lack of respect and kindness, and not the least over-doing of ceremony, which would have been still more offensive. All was natural and genial, as if there had not once existed a strong hostility to Frank Howard the machinist. I was charmed at the manner with which my dear host and hostess completely

Digitized by Google

overcame their prejudices, or at least suppressed them, and treated Mr. Howard in all respects as an honored and welcome guest, and did this assuredly not in the spirit of hypocrisy, but of *hospitality*, as they understood its requirements.

Soon Rachel Noales and the other young persons of the Christmas party, came in, were introduced, seated, and conversation became general and free. This afforded me the coveted opportunity of having a moment's talk aside with my brother.

"Johnny! tell me now, and tell me quickly and truly—was there any design on you or your friend's part to get him invited here?"

"Design! bless you, no!" replied my brother, opening wide his great gray eyes.

"I thought not; for if the truth must be told, honest Johnny was any thing but a *diplomate*."

"Well, there was no conscious maneuvering on *your* part, but was there not on *his*?"

"Why, bless you, no! Why should there have been?"

"Why should there have been? Oh, Johnny! Johnny! where are your perceptive faculties? You will never be wide awake enough for a soldier!"

"I don't know what you would be at."

"I suppose not. But did you observe nothing interesting in the meeting between Mr. Howard and Miss Legare!"

"Oh, oh, oh, oh! Whew ew-ew-ew! Is that it?"

"Yes."

"That's what you meant when you pinched my arm black and blue?"

"Yes."

"A sorry dog. He never hinted one word about this to me."

"He had no right to do so, nor must you speak of it."

"Eh! why?"

Digitized by Google

"Because——but I had better tell you all about it. They met about three years ago, for the first time. It was at Saratoga, where he was making quite a figure. The acquaintance had ripened to friendship, and something more, when 'papa' bethought himself to inquire who this very distinguished-looking gentleman might be, at home, among his own people, and was informed that he was—a machinist by trade! Recall to mind the passion of Desdemona's proud patrician 'pa' on discovering that he had a black-a-moor for a son-in-law, and you may be able remotely to conceive the consternation of Mr. Legare. He hurried his family away from Saratoga, and forbid the name of Howard to be mentioned in his presence. The lovers never corresponded, and never met until this evening! You may judge how much cause for speculation there is in this meeting."

"Yes—but within these three years great changes have taken place. Mr. Howard is a distinguished man—a man of fortune, and of acknowledged talent—one of the law-givers of the nation. And Mr. Legare and his family are reduced from wealth to a moderate competency."

"Yes, I know; but that does not change the old aristocrat's manner of regarding the affair. He contends that a gentleman born is always a gentleman, and a peasant always a peasant, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of fortune, that may enrich the one and impoverish the other."

"Or rather, he *contended so!*—it belongs to the past tense. Look at him *now*—see what deference he pays to Mr. Howard's opinions."

"The mere politeness of the host. Take nothing for granted from that."

"Nay, but Frank Howard is a gentleman of whom any father might be proud as a son-in-law."

"Very likely. But Mr. Legare is not 'any' father.

Digitized by Google

However, what I wish to know is, whether Frank Howard did not use you to procure the 'bid' that brought him hither?"

"*No, indeed!*"

"How came it, then, you artful boy, that you took just *the* course and the *only* course by which you could procure *him* an invitation?"

"I don't understand you."

"You innocent! How came it then that you wrote to Mr. Legare, you would be very happy to obey his summons, and spend the holidays at Wolfbrake, but that you had *a friend* with you whom you could not leave, and whom *you took care not to mention by name?*"

"Oh, because I never gave the matter a moment's thought. When I got Mr. Legare's letter, I just sat down and answered it right off, and mentioned my friend merely *as* my friend. If I had, as you seem to think, been fishing for an invitation for *him* also, I certainly should have mentioned him by name and title as the Hon. Frank Howard of Massachusetts, &c., &c., &c."

"In which case you certainly would not have been invited to bring him here."

"Probably not, but I did not know *that.* What knew *I* of the hostility, or even of the acquaintance between the parties? I acted only in simple honesty."

"The best way to act, my dear Johnny."

"And so *blundered* into helping the lovers."

"Not so. You were providentially led."

"Well, as soon as ever I received the invitation, I hastened to write and give the name of my friend to our host, as I should have done at first, if I had dreamed of his being invited to accompany me. And as for Frank Howard, he was as innocent of design as myself. He knew nothing about the matter until I showed him Mr. Legare's *last* letter, and pressed him to go with me. He then asked me if

Digitized by Google

Mr. Legare was any relation of the *Legares of Louisiana.* I said I believed he had brothers in Louisiana, but I was not certain, as I knew very little of the family. Then he told me that he had had the pleasure of meeting a Mr. Legare of Louisiana, at Saratoga, and should feel happy in making the acquaintance of any of his family; and there the conversation stopped. Frank was evidently as much astonished as delighted at the unexpected meeting with his lady love."

"I am glad to know it," said I.

And then, not to continue the rudeness of an aside conversation, I took my brother to Rachel Noales, and left him with her, while I joined my kind old host.

Supper was soon after announced, and we were all marshaled into the dining-room, where a sumptuous feast was spread, over which we lingered, eating and drinking, with epicurean leisure, and talking and laughing for more than an hour. I said *we*—but I should rather say *they*—for I could not eat, or talk, or laugh. At last the long-drawn meal came to an end.

The company adjourned to the drawing-room, and an hour was passed in pleasant conversation, and then, in consideration of the fatigue of the newly-arrived guests, we separated for the night.

In the hall I noticed a diminutive page, of the African race, who rejoiced in the chivalric name of Emmanuel Philibert, which was adapted to daily and popular use by the abbreviative of Phlit. Phlit was standing, and solemnly holding a light in one hand and a boot-jack in the other, waiting to attend the two gentlemen to their bed-room.

But Mr. Legare took upon himself the office of groom of the chambers, and accompanied his latest guests to their apartment.

Rachel Noales and myself reached ours about the same time. We heard the voice of Mr. Legare taking leave of

Digitized by Google

the gentlemen for the night; we heard him and the little waiter Phlit, go down stairs and out at the hall door, fastening it after them.

"I will take care that this is secured to-night," said Rachel, going and carefully locking our door, and then trying it to be sure that it was fast. "That will do," she said, when she had satisfied herself of its security.

Then, as we were very weary, we prepared to retire. We were soon in bed.

Rachel was soon asleep.

Not so myself. I lay perfectly still, almost breathless, waiting the developements of the night. And, reader, it was while lying thus wide awake and gazing straight out through the window to the spot where the family tomb-stones gleamed white and spectral in the moonlight among the dark firs, that my ear was struck by the click of the recoiling lock, and turning, I saw the door swing slowly open and my dark-robed midnight visitant enter. Though wide awake, as at this moment, I was deprived, by excess of awe, of the power of speech or motion. Slowly the spectre advanced and stood as before, pointing to the dark red spot hid beneath the carpet under her feet. I essayed once more to speak to her, but such terror as her presence had never before inspired, froze my utterance. I listened, wondering if my companion in the other bed was conscious of this supernatural presence in the room; but the deep and regular breathing of Rachel assured me that she was sleeping soundly, the deep sleep of fatigue.

And all this while the black-robed woman stood holding my eyes with her fixed and burning gaze, and pointing to the spot on the floor. Then letting her arm fall slowly to her side, she passed, in measured steps, from the room, and through the door that swung to, gradually, and closed behind her. Again I essayed to cry out, but the spell was still upon me, and no sound escaped my paralyzed lips.

Digitized by Google

While lying thus, I heard once more the recoiling click of a lock, and the swing of a door upon its hinges; but this time it was *not our own* but *another door*—that of the opposite chamber where my brother and his friend slept.

"Who's there?" I heard John call out, in no pleasant voice, and seeming evidently annoyed at the disturbance.

There was no answer.

"Who's *there*?" he repeated.

No answer.

"Who's THERE?"

Continued silence.

"Phlit!"

No reply.

"*Phlit!*"

No reply.

"PHLIT!"

Dead silence.

"Jet! is that you?"

The silence of the grave continued; until at last the calling of my brother awoke his companion in the other bed.

"What is the matter, John?" I heard him ask.

"Why, some one has unlocked our door and entered, and I can't make them speak; but shoot me if I don't find them out!" said my brother, jumping out of the bed and beginning to strike a light.

"You have been dreaming."

"Have I?—look there, then!"

"Well, I see the door is open; but you probably forgot to lock it."

"I'll make sure of it *now* then," said John, banging the door violently, locking it with a resonant force and proceeding to search for the supposed intruder. Of course the search was fruitless, and with many muttered grumbles and threats, he went back to bed.

Digitized by Google

My brother had not seen the supernatural visitant to his room, who, go where she might, *appeared only to me.*

While turning these things over in my mind, again I heard John's lock turn and his door swing open, and almost simultaneously his voice called out:

"What the demon does this mean! Who are you, then?" as he jumped out of bed, relocked the door, struck a light and proceeded once more vainly to examine the room.

"Well, this is certainly the most inexplicable thing I ever knew in my life!" exclaimed John, with an intonation between astonishment and indignation.

"Oh! I really suppose you did not lock the door properly," replied Howard, getting up and going to ascertain the state of the case. And I heard him unlock and lock the door several times, and finally locking it fast he said:

"There! now I will guarantee that it will stay shut!" and went back to his couch.

I do not think that more than fifteen minutes had passed before I heard, for the third time, their lock fly back and their door swing open.

"By Jupiter! this is past belief!" exclaimed Mr. Howard, while my brother, without speaking, jumped out of bed and struck a light.

They searched the room. They came out thence and searched the hall. They went up into the garret and searched the rooms over our heads. And finding no one, they returned, wondering and conjecturing to their chamber, and for the third time that night fast locked their door.

"Take the key out, John," said Mr. Howard. And John withdrew the key and took it to bed with him.

About fifteen minutes more passed, and then—"click!" flew the lock, open swung the door, and out of bed jumped John, in a state of mind between affright and rage.

"John, never mind! it is clear that the door will not re-

Digitized by Google

main closed: leave it open: to-morrow I will look at the lock and see what is amiss," said Mr. Howard.

And for the fourth time that night I heard my brother muttering like distant thunder, go back to his bed.

But I do not think that he slept that night, and I am sure that I did not.

In the morning I felt weary, ill, and certain that if this mysterious visitation continued, I should go mad. As I was dressing before the toilet mirror, the reflection of my own face in the glass startled and terrified me, it looked so pale, wild and haggard, and not unlike the awful face of the midnight spectre. When Rachel and myself were dressed and ready to go down, I opened the door. And just at that moment my brother and Mr. Howard came out of their chamber and bade us "Good-morning."

"Were you at our door last night, Agnes?" John asked me.

"At your door, John? Certainly not."

"Was'n't you, though?"

"Assuredly not. What should have brought me there?"

"Well, *somebody* was, that's all!" said my brother, while Mr. Howard silently looked what he did not say.

We all went down together to the parlor, where a fine fire was burning, and Mathilde, in her fresh morning beauty, waited to welcome us.

And soon our host and hostess entered, and in a few moments the breakfast was announced, and we all adjourned to the table.

Breakfast was served long before the usual hour, that the gentlemen of our party might make an early start upon the fox hunt that Mr. Legare had arranged for that day.

While we were still at the table, Mrs. Legare bethought herself to hope that the gentlemen had rested well: when my brusque and thoughtless brother John said:

Digitized by Google

"No, indeed, my dear Madam! We were 'fashed wi' a bogle' all night long."

"Sir?"

"He means, Madam, that we could not by any means keep our door locked, and had finally to give up the attempt," explained Mr. Howard.

A deathly paleness overspread Mrs. Legare's face. I knew she regretted the question that she had been tempted to ask, and now she receded from the subject.

Mr. Legare, who had kept his eyes averted and turned a deaf ear to the discourse, now adroitly changed the topic, by speaking of the hunt.

The horses were neighing with impatience in the yard, and as soon as the gentlemen arose from the breakfast-table, they prepared themselves, mounted and rode off to their day's sport.

It proved a very successful chase, for they took the brush before twelve o'clock and returned with fine appetites to the excellent dinner set upon the table at two in the afternoon.

The evening was passed in quiet hilarity, and we separated at a comparatively early hour.

But that night, reader! It passes all my powers of description. I had always been in the habit of "saying" my prayers before retiring; but of late, since I had been habitually haunted, I had taken to praying devoutly before going to bed. I prayed with unusual earnestness this night, and then I retired to my couch. So wearied out in body was I, that despite of mental excitement, I soon fell asleep.

I do not know how long I had slept, probably several hours, for it was near day, when I was awakened by a strong light and a great noise.

I opened my eyes and collected my senses to find that both proceeded from the opposite bed-room, where Mr. Howard and John were up with a lighted candle, looking about for the mysterious and persevering intruder upon their

Digitized by Google

slumbers. The light from their room streamed across the hall and through the open door into ours and fell upon the tall, dark-robed, stern-visaged haunter of my chamber, where she stood pointing her spectral finger to the spot upon the floor. A moment she stood thus, and then, as before, passed slowly from the room and through the open door, that without hands, closed behind her.

The silvery beams of the full moon poured through the two east windows, and in its light I now saw Rachel Noales sitting up straight, stark and still in her bed.

"Rachel! Rachel!" said I, "what is the matter?"

"Heaven and earth, Agnes, we are HAUNTED!" she gasped rather than spoke.

"Have you seen any thing, Rachel?" I asked, now hoping that she had, for I felt it terrible to be alone in my spectral experiences.

"No, no, I have not seen any thing! But that door! that door! that I am sure I fastened so carefully, was unlocked without a key, and opened without hands! I heard and saw it, for I was laying awake!"

"Let us hope that you were mistaken, Rachel.

"No, no, impossible! Oh, I would not sleep another night in this house for the wealth of the Indies!"

While we were talking, the fruitless search proceeded in the opposite room, until at length it was given up and the friends retired.

Rachel left her bed and came into mine, where she lay and trembled.

Scarcely fifteen minutes of peace and silence passed ere the lock of both doors flew back, and the doors swung open.

Rachel began screaming; the occupants of the opposite chamber started up, exclaiming in every variety of interjection. I arose and donned my double wrapper, and put my

Digitized by Google

feet in slippers, to go and procure restoratives, for Rachel had fallen into spasms.

"For heaven's sake what is the matter, Agnes?" inquired my brother, who had put on his dressing-gown and come to the door.

"Oh, the Lord only knows!"

I had seized a bottle of cologne from the dressing-table and began to deluge the face and hands of Rachel, while my brother went and brought his candle and put it within-side of our door.

"Do go and wake up Mrs. Legare, John, I can do nothing for Rachel, I never saw any body in hystericks before, if this *is* hystericks!" said I, feeling both frightened at the condition, and angry at the weakness of my patient.

But even while I spoke, Mr. Howard, who during this time had been hastily dressing himself, went down stairs to the old house in search of assistance.

The family were speedily aroused. Mr. and Mrs. Legare hurried into the new house. The lady herself entered the chamber where Rachel, as often as her eyes opened in the haunted chamber, fell into new spasms.

"She will not recover until she is removed from this, Mrs. Legare," I said.

"Perhaps not: assist me to put her wrapper on, and we will take her down, and lay her on the parlor sofa," my hostess replied.

And after we had dressed our patient, we carried her down stairs, where the fire was still smoldering, and only needed replenishment.

When the wood was brought and thrown on, and the fire blazed up brightly, lighting and warming the whole room, and the shutters were unclosed, and the rising sun smiled in upon us all, I felt that the gladsome scene was enough to put to flight all the ghosts in Hades, and all the superstitious terrors that ignorance is heir to. I almost

Digitized by Google

began to doubt that I was haunted; and would have done so, but for the sombre and disturbed countenance of my host, who, as soon as Rachel Noales was soothed and put to sleep on the sofa, turned to us and inquired:

"Now, my friends, will you be so good as to explain the cause of your disturbance?"

"A mere trifle, sir," said my brother, brusquely; "the house is HAUNTED."

"You, of course, do not speak seriously: you cannot credit such absurdities."

"My dear sir, I never believed in ghosts until within the last two nights; but now, with such evidence before me, I should be the most unbelieving of infidels to refuse credence," said my brother, with a mixture of gravity and banter in his tone, that made it impossible to think him in earnest.

"Will you be so kind, Mr. Howard, as to enlighten us?" inquired Mr. Legare, turning toward that gentleman.

"Since you desire me to do so, my dear sir. Well, then, for the two nights we have passed beneath your very hospitable and delightful roof, our rest has been somewhat disturbed—"

"Somewhat disturbed! It has been altogether broken up!" interrupted my brother.

"Be silent, John," I whispered, pinching him.

Mr. Howard went on.

"—By an inexplicable circumstance, namely, the flying open of the doors, after we had carefully and securely locked them."

"We haven't slept a wink since we have been in the house. We have spent the nights in jumping up out of bed to lock the doors, and only to have them unlock and fly open in our faces," said John.

"I thank you, gentlemen, for the information you have given me. Agnes, my dear, have you been disturbed?"

Digitized by Google

"Yes, sir."

"How?"

"In the same manner, sir, by the unaccountable flying open of the door after I had locked it," said I, suppressing the fact, or fancy, of the mysterious, midnight visitant.

"My dear, you never complained of this before."

"No, sir."

"Why?"

"Because it was more an affair of interest than of complaint. I wished first to investigate alone."

"And have you done so?"

"As far as was possible."

"With what result, my dear Agnes?"

"With no satisfactory one, sir."

"Friends," said the old gentleman, turning toward the assembled guests, "it is vain to deny that a mystery *does* exist, and for the whole term of my residence here, if not before, *has* existed in this house, that has, heretofore, defied all investigation. Many of you have heard the circumstances under which the transfer of property was made. You have heard that Madeleine Van der Vaughan, the last inheritrix of this estate, was a high-spirited, haughty, self-willed woman, with one idea—the regeneration of her patrimonial estate; that every thing—money, health, peace, *conscience*, LIFE itself, was sacrificed to her monomania; that at last she died a victim to her own ruling passion; that her husband married again, sold the estate, even unto the very graveyard where her body lay, and left the neighborhood; that *I* became the purchaser; and, finally, that since I have lived in the house, not one chamber-door has been secure from a seemingly supernatural opening.

"The superstitious among my servants, and poor, ignorant neighbors, ascribe all these mysteries to the presence of Madeleine Van Der Vaughan's restless ghost, still haunting the scene of her toils, ambitions, and disappointments.

Digitized by Google

Modern spiritualists would, without doubt, ascribe it to the agency of spirits. I believe in none of these absurdities. But the annoying mystery remains unexplained, and I would give 'the half of my kingdom,' to him who should elucidate it."

The old gentleman, at the conclusion of his speech, looked around for an answer among his audience.

"Do you not think that there may be a defect in the locks, sir?" inquired Mr. Howard.

"Oh, 'I cry you, *mercy*,' sir! such a possibility did not in the very first instance escape us. The locks have been taken off and examined, and no perceptible defect could be discovered. . The half—'the half of my kingdom' to the knight who shall rid me of this mysterious key-bearer."

I saw, by the twinkle of Mr. Howard's eyes, that he possessed a clue to the mystery. I saw him exchange glances with Mathilde, who had just joined us, looking blooming as Hebe in her fresh morning toilet.

Now, I was always a bashful girl—I mean moderately so; therefore, I never could account for the spirit that entered and moved me to say and do what I soon said and did. I happened to be standing beside Mr. Legare, and his hand rested caressingly upon my head, when he repeated:

"'The half of my kingdom' to the knight that shall deliver my castle from this dragon"

I answered:

"Oh, your majesty! Never offer the half of your kingdom! None but a mercenary wretch would undertake the enterprise for such a bribe! Offer the hand of your princess, and a thousand lances shall be laid in rest for such a prize!"

I do not know whether he discovered the serious meaning under my lightly-spoken words, for he fell into the humor of the jest, patted me on the head, and said:

Digitized by Google

"Agreed! the hand of my princess to the brave knight who shall deliver me from this plague!"

"I accept the challenge!" said Mr. Howard, "and promise that in twenty-four hours the mysterious carrier of the keys shall be vanquished!"

"It is a treaty! it is a treaty!" exclaimed one after another of the young men and maidens who were present.

Mr Legare looked around in some confusion at being taken up so seriously, and then laughing, said:

"Very well—agreed! I ratify the compact, Mr. Howard; though I don't believe *your* part of it can be fulfilled. And now to breakfast!"

We adjourned to the old house—all who were in the secret wondering in what manner Mr. Howard would undertake to exorcise the key-demon; but all discussion was waived for the present, while we dispatched the necessary business of the table.

After breakfast, Frank Howard asked for a horse, and rode up to Frost Height.

He was absent two hours, at the end of which time he returned, bringing with him a set of locksmith's tools, and a flat piece of board, such as show-locks are sometimes screwed upon for a sign.

When he had brought these things into the new house, he challenged Mr. Legare, and all who wished to see the mystery evolved, to accompany him to the chambers above.

Of course, everybody accepted the invitation.

We all went first into the gentlemen's room, and stood around in a semicircle, with our faces toward the door, and our eyes fixed upon the lock and Frank Howard. First he turned the key, and begged that we would observe that all was *fast*, and watch the result. Then he came away, and we waited with our eyes fixed upon the lock.

In a little less than fifteen minutes we both heard and saw the catch fly back, and the door swing open!

Digitized by Google

I cannot tell you with what a superstitious thrill we all shuddered, though this was in broad daylight, and in the mutually supporting presence of a dozen persons, and though there was a machinist on the spot, professing himself ready to demonstrate that this was a purely mechanical phenomenon!

"There! ladies and gentlemen, you all see the action!"

"We all see!"

"No hand was near the lock!"

"None!"

"There could have been no deception.

"Assuredly not," we all declared.

"Oh! certainly not—I have seen the thing twenty times," said Mr. Legare.

"And I endorse your declarations, sir; you were right! There *was* no deception—there *is* none! It is a purely mechanical phenomenon! But, listen! *spiritual powers reside in mechanical forces.* Every year we live elucidates this mystery, though none but the deepest thinkers see this truth in all its importance. Look you! a savage thinks that there is a diabolism in the self-action of a watch—in the reflection of a looking-glass. *We* think both mysteries to be simple mechanical combinations! Pray look at the lock before us. I observe that it is Harmon's patent. Poor Harmon, a demented machinist, scarcely knew what he would be at, and so undertook to make an invaluable improvement in the common door-lock. This is one of his; its intricate machinery has got out of order, and hence 'the fantastic tricks before high heaven' that these rooms have witnessed! I am about to take off the lock, to prove what I have stated, as well as to remedy the evil."

"Oh, sir, *that* has been tried—I have seen it done—hope nothing from that!" exclaimed Mr. Legare.

"Patience, my dear sir!" said Frank Howard, taking up the tools with so much of the air of a man accustomed

Digitized by Google

to the handling of them, that old Mr. Legare winced and fidgetted.

But Frank speedily took off the lock, and brought it to us, for inspection.

"Here! you notice that nothing seems amiss," he said.

"Nothing in the world—I told you that before," replied Mr. Legare.

"Furthermore, if *now* I were to turn the key, it would remain turned."

"Certainly, while the lock is *off* the door, it *looks* exactly right, and *behaves* exactly right; but just put it *on* the door and lock it, and in from ten to thirty minutes, more or less, it will fly open."

"Exactly; that is what I am about to explain," said Frank Howard, taking up a flat, smooth piece of board, and laying it upon the table; and then he took the lock, laid it on the board, screwed it tightly, turned the key, and said:

"It is not the circumstance of this lock being attached to the *door* that has caused it to act in this manner; for I will prove to you that if the same lock be screwed tightly to any other *resisting* object—as for instance this *board*—it will act in the same irregular manner. Watch it now, and you will see."

We did so, and in a few minutes we saw the catch fly back, as before.

"I will tell you the reason," said Mr. Howard, unscrewing the lock from the board, and inviting us to look on.

"Now, though there *seems* to be no defect whatever in this lock, yet in truth the whole inside machinery has started slightly outward. This does not affect its right action while *detached;* but when *attached,* the continued *pressure* of the board to which it is fastened, gradually acts upon the spring, and causes the catch in a given time to fly back, and unlock, and the force with which this occurs, opens the door. I can

Digitized by Google

well imagine that such unexplained movements, occurring in the middle of the night, should have rather a supernatural effect. But the evil can be remedied in a few minutes."

And then, while we were all dumb with astonishment, Frank Howard took up his tools, went to work, and in about twenty minutes fixed the inside of the lock, and replaced it on the door.

"Now," said he, "if ever this door comes open again without hands, I will consent to forfeit the fair reward of my triumph. And now, friends, I will go to work and mend the other."

And, inviting us to precede him, he passed out, locked the door, gave the key to Mr. Legare, and begged him to take notice that the door would remain fast until *he* (Mr. Legare) might choose to open it, or to give up the key.

We reached the other chamber-door, where twenty minutes' work served to rectify the error. Then locking that, as he had done the other, he called me to witness that it should remain fast until I should use, or give up the key that he placed in my charge.

We then went down stairs, Mr. Legare having one key safe in his pocket—I having the other secure in mine.

It was the last day of the old year, and company were expected in the evening—not to dance, but to watch it out.

Mrs. Legare went to attend to her extra housekeeping duties, and the young ladies retired to their chambers to arrange their dresses for the next day.

Mr. Legare, Frank Howard, my brother John, and the other gentlemen, took their guns and game-bags, called their dogs, and started off "birding."

I went into the parlor where Rachel Noales still lay upon the sofa, in the state of exhaustion that had succeeded her fright in the morning, and told her that the mystery of the locks was discovered, and explained, as far as I could, the process of demonstration. And Rachel rallied from that hour.

Digitized by Google

I had reassured *her*, but who should reassure me? I was still very deeply disturbed. True, the mystery of the opening doors was satisfactorily explained. True, that my midnight visitor might have been an optical illusion, produced by the mysterious surroundings acting upon my highly-susceptible temperament. And true, also, that the resemblance between my visionary woman and the portrait of Madeleine Van der Vaughan, might have been a mere fancy. But the *spot of blood on the floor?* Who should explain that?

From time to time, during that day, I slipped up stairs to examine the state of the doors: they remained fast.

The gentlemen dined out, but joined us at an early tea. Nothing was said of the event of the morning, until, as we arose from the table, little Phlit sidled up to his master, and asked for the keys so that he might make fires in the bedrooms, "for de ladies an' gemlen to dress for ebenin'."

"The deuce! You tell me that the doors remain fast?" demanded Mr. Legare, turning around upon us all.

I assured him that they *did*. He was too polite to doubt my statement; but he wished to see for himself.

We followed him, and found him in a state of admiration before Mr. Howard's door. When he had gazed some time at that, and tried it in various ways, he turned about and went to mine, which he proved in the same manner. And having found that both remained fast locked, without mistake, he extended his hand to Frank, and said:

"Candidly, Mr. Howard, I did not believe in your success until this moment. You have fairly vanquished the ghosts!"

Frank Howard took the offered hand, and bowed gravely and silently as he again resigned it. The doors were then opened, and Phlit admitted to do his duties. And we separated to prepare for the evening watch-party.

It was eight o'clock when our friends from the neighbourhood came in; and after partaking of a bowl of egg-nogg

Digitized by Google

in the dining-room, we adjourned to the parlor, where we passed four hours in very pleasant, social intercourse, conversing, singing, and reading. And as the clock neared the stroke of twelve, Mr. Howard took a volume of Tennyson, and in an affecting manner, read his tender and beautiful Requiem of the Dying Year. All were moved, and as the reader finished, the tears were running down the cheeks of Mathilde, who said:

"Oh! I do not know how any one, even the most thoughtless, can bear to 'dance out the old year!' I could no more do it than I could dance beside the deathbed of a dear old friend! But I must not greet the infant New Year with tears," she exclaimed, and dashing aside the sparkling drops that spangled the roses of her cheeks, and turning to her parents, she said,

"Dearest father! dearest mother! let me be the first to wish you a Happy New Year, and many, many, ever happier returns of it!"

"You make our anniversaries happy, best child: now tell us truly what shall be our New Year's gift to you?" said Mr. Legare, while Mrs. Legare silently embraced her daughter.

Blushing deeply, Mathilde whispered one word to her father, who repressed a rising sigh, and asked:

"Is this so? Must this be so, my dearest child?"

"Yes, my father."

"Then am I doubly bound to do what I am about to do. Mr. Howard!"

Frank Howard stepped eagerly forward.

"Mr. Howard! I always settle outstanding debts at the first of the year," said Mr. Legare, taking the hand of Mathilde and placing it in that of Frank Howard, who gently pressed it, as he answered,

"Sir, I believe that for years, I have possessed the priceless heart of this dear maiden, but her fair hand, I would

Digitized by Google

prefer to owe to her father's approval and good-will, rather than to a mere accident."

"Sir, there are no such things as *accidents!* I am sixty years old who say it! And as for the rest, sir, 'her father's approval and good-will,' always follows his esteem and respect, and now goes with his consent! God bless you! Be true to Mathilde!"

"May Heaven deal with me as I with her!" said Frank Howard, earnestly.

While this important little family aside was going on, the other guests were wishing each other a "Happy New Year," and chatting and laughing too merrily and noisily to hear what was there passing.

And now they asked for their cloaks and hoods, which Rachel Noales and I flew to bring; and in less than half an hour all the evening visitors had departed, and the returning sound of their sleigh-bells died away in the distance.

We that were left, separated and retired. When we reached our chamber, Rachel and I locked the door and went to bed.

We were sufficiently wearied out to go fast asleep, and sleep until late in the morning, when the loud knocking of little Jet at our chamber-door aroused us. I jumped up and went and opened it.

"De doors *do* stay shet fas' nuff now!" exclaimed my little maid, with a broad grin, as she entered.

"Yes, Jet; thanks to Mr. Howard."

"Aint him a smart gemlan, dough? Wunner if him's a wizard?"

"I really do not know, Jet. You must ask your Miss Mathilde."

"Law! do *she* know?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Den I ax her sure."

And so my little maid proceeded to light the fire

Digitized by Google

This was a New-Year's day, and a large company was expected to dinner. And it was upon this occasion that the engagement of the Hon. Frank Howard of Massachusetts, and Miss Mathilde Legare, was announced.

But little is left to be told. For the remainder of my stay, I rested in undisturbed peace, suffering no recurrence of opening doors and midnight visitors. I was almost sorry that my ghostly mysteries had found so commonplace a solution—a mechanical defect taking the place of the phantom key, and an optical illusion explaining my midnight vision!—all was accounted for except *the spot of blood upon the floor!* Upon the morning of my departure, I called Mathilde into the room, and striking an attitude like that of the woman of my vision, I silently pointed to the hidden spot, and gazed at Mathilde, to discover consciousness in her countenance.

But Mathilde first looked back in innocent surprise, and then recollecting herself, said:

"Oh! you allude to a stain there; yes it *is* a pity! the men who were painting red lines on the doors, overturned the paint-pot and made a deep, ugly, crimson stain; and like the spot of blood on Bluebeard's key,—'the more we scrub it the brighter it grows!' The next time a carpenter happens to be at work here, Mamma intends to have it planed out."

So much for my *last* hold upon the supernatural! Let me repeat:—the phantom key, a mere mechanical defect; the spot of blood, a mere stain of paint; and the midnight spectre, an optical illusion!

But the reader may ask, how I account for the resemblance between the woman of my vision and the portrait of the ill-fated Madeleine Van der Vaughan? I answer, that at this distance of time, I regard it as the effect of imagination only, as was the whole vision!

It was about two months after the conclusion of my

Digitized by Google

Christmas visit, that I was summoned to Wolfbrake to act as bridesmaid for Mathilde, for it was immediately after the rising of Congress upon the 4th of March, that Mr. Howard went up to claim the hand of his betrothed. They were married upon the 7th. It was a wedding in the fine old-fashioned country style, with a ball and supper, the same evening; and dinner parties and dancing parties, given successively by the neighbors, in honor of the bride, almost every day and night for the next two weeks.

They have now been married several years, and have several children—boys and girls. Frank Howard now holds a "high official" position in the present Administration. And old Mr. Legare is justly proud of his gifted son-in-law. As Mathilde is too much of a Creole to bear the rigor of a New England climate they divide the year, spending the summer in Massachusetts and the winter in Virginia "with the old folks at home."

And year after year I have visited them there, and slept in the haunted chamber, but never, since the locks were mended, have I been troubled by an opening door, or a midnight ghost!

Digitized by Google

THE PRESENTIMENT;

OR, THE

RED HILL TRAGEDY.

Listen! and I will tell a fearful story!
Since I remember aught about myself,
A strange heart-sickness, almost like to death,
A deep remorse for some unacted crime,
For some impossible, nameless wickedness
Was on me—in its prophecy I lived.—*Wilson.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE PRESENTIMENT.

CHAPTER I

THE QUADROON.

Oh! yet we hope that, somehow, good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood.—*Tennyson.*

THERE was an account of an execution item that met my eyes, in glancing over the columns of a newspaper. It made no more impression upon me at the time than such paragraphs make upon you or any of us. My glance slided over that to the next items, chronicling in order the success of a benevolent ball, the arrival of a popular singer, &c.; and I should have forgotten all about it, had not the execution occurred near the plantation of a dear friend, with whom I was accustomed to pass a part of every year. From that friend I heard the story—a domestic tragedy, which, for its inspirations of pity and terror, equalled any old Greek drama that I ever read. I know not if I can do any thing like justice to the subject, by giving the story in my own words.

Near the city of M——, on the A—— river, stood the plantation of Red Hill. It was one of the largest cotton plantations in the South, covering several square miles, but it was ill-cultivated and unprofitable.

Digitized by Google

The plantation house was situated a mile back from the river, in a grove of trees on the brow of the hill, quite out of the reach of fog and miasma.

At the time I speak of, it was owned by Colonel Waring, a widower, with one son, to whom he had given his mother's family name of Oswald. The ostensible female head of this house was the Major's own mother, Madame Waring, an old lady of French extraction, and now fallen deeply into the vale of years and infirmities. The real head was Phædra, a female slave, and a Mestizza* by birth. Phædra had one child, a boy, some two years younger than the heir of the family. Notwithstanding the want of a lady hostess at the head of the table, there was not a pleasanter or a more popular mansion in the State than Colonel Waring's. Indeed, he might be said to have kept *open* house, for his dwelling was half the time filled with company, comprising old and young gentlemen, ladies, and children.

Without any one habit of dissipation, Colonel Waring was a bon-vivant of the gayest order, who loved to play the host, forget care, and enjoy himself with his friends and neighbors. He was benevolent, also; no appeal to his heart was ever slighted. He was frequently in want of ready money, yet, when he had cash, it was as likely to be lavished in injudicious alms-giving, as expended upon his own debts or necessities. I have heard of his giving a thousand dollars to set up a poor widow in business, and at the same time put off his creditors, and go deeper into debt for his negroes' winter clothing. In the times when the yellow fever desolated the South, his mansion year after year became the house of refuge to those who fled from the cities, yet were unable to bear the expense of a watering-place. His house was a place where the trammels of conventionalism could, without offense, be cast off for a while. Children might do as they liked; young people as they

* The Mestizza is half Indian, half Negro.

Digitized by Google

pleased; and old folks might—*dance*, if they felt lively. "It was at Colonel Waring's," was sufficient explanation of any sort of eccentricity.

Madame Waring, in her distant chamber, was not much more than a "myth," or, at best, a family tradition; yet her name undoubtedly gave a sanction to the presence of ladies in a house, which, without her, they would probably never have entered.

The Mestizza was scarcely less of a myth. Everybody knew of her existence, and there were few who did not understand her position as well as that of the beautiful boy Valentine, who was the constant companion of Oswald; but Phædra was never seen, nor was her presence to be guessed, except in the well-ordered house, and the delicious breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, prepared under her supervision, and sent up to the guests.

Colonel Waring had his enemies. What man has not? And even among those who at times sat at his board, and slept under his roof, it was said that "justice should go before generosity;" and that Colonel Waring, by his reckless charities and lavish hospitality, wronged both his creditors and his heir. Others whispered that he plunged into the excitements of company, for the purpose of drowning thought or conscience; and if a stranger came into the neighborhood, and found himself, as he would be not unlikely to do, the guest of Colonel Waring, he would be told by some fellow-visitor that the late Mrs. Waring, the wife of the Colonel, had died, raving mad, in a Northern Lunatic Asylum.

And, among the women, it was whispered that in dying she had deeply cursed the Mestizza and her boy.

However that might be, it is certain that Phædra had always manifested the most sincere attachment to the lady's son; and from the time that Oswald was left an orphan, at the age of six months, to the time of her death, no one

Digitized by Google

could be a more devoted nurse or a greater child-spoiler than she was to him. Phædra's nature was despotic, and every one on the plantation had to yield to Master Oswald, or they would find rations shortened, holydays refused, work increased, clothing neglected, and be punished in numerous indirect ways, not by their most indulgent of masters but by the influence of the Mestizza. Even her own son was scarcely an exception to the universal homage she exacted for Oswald. He had two claims upon her—in the first place, in her eyes he was the young master, the heir apparent, the Crown Prince — and then he had "no mother."

And the boy on his side repaid his nurse's devotion by the most sincere affection, both for her and for his foster brother, Valentine.

Oswald "took after" his father, both in the Saxon fairness of his fresh complexion, flaxen hair, and lively blue eyes, and in the hearty benevolence and careless gayety of his disposition. Like his father, also, he lacked self-esteem, and the dignity of character that it gives. Nay, he had not half so much of that quality as had the son of the Mestizza, whose overweening pride won for him the name of "Little Prince."

Valentine was an exquisitely beautiful boy; he was like his Mestizza mother, in the clear, dark-brown skin, and regular aquiline features; but, instead of her straight black locks, he had soft, shining, bluish-black hair, that fell in numerous spiral ringlets all around his neck, and when he stooped vailed his cheeks. In startling, yes, in absolutely frightful contrast to that dark skin and raven black hair and eyebrows, were his clear, light-blue, Saxon eyes! One who understands scientifically, or feels intuitively, the nature of such a fearful combination of antagonistic and never to be harmonized elements of character, fated, without the saving grace of God, to become the elements of insanity and crime,

Digitized by Google

cannot look upon its external outward signs without shuddering.

Think of it; and wonder, if you can, at any thing in his after life! Think of a boy combining in his own nature the ardent passions and impulsive temperament of the African negro, the tameless love of freedom of the North American Indian, and the intellectual power and domineering pride of the Anglo-Saxon. Place him in the condition of a pet slave; leave him without moral and Christian instruction; alternately praise and pamper or condemn and punish him—not as his merit, but as your caprice decides; let him grow up in that manner, and, as it seems to me, the result is so sure that it might be demonstrated in advance.

Both the boys were great favorites with the visitors who frequented the house. Oswald, as the son of the host, and also for his bright, joyous, frolicsome nature; and Valentine, for his beauty, wit, and piquant sauciness. Willingly would Phædra have kept the lad away from the "white folks," but Oswald would not suffer his playmate to be separated from himself. Nor when the visitors had once discovered Valentine's value as an entertainer, would they have spared him.

The lads did not seem in the least to understand their relations as young master and servant, but behaved in all respects toward each other, as peers—the quicker and more impulsive nature taking the lead as a matter of course. And that nature happened to belong to the Mestizza's son.

Valentine had the keenest appreciation of pleasure, and the quickest intelligence in discovering the way to it. In all their boyish amusements, Valentine was the purveyor; in all their adventures, he was the leader—Oswald entering into all his plans, and following all his suggestions, with the heartiest good-will. And, in all their childish misdemeanors, he was the tempter, and always, also, the willing

Digitized by Google

scapegoat—that is to say, when in a fit of generosity, to shield Oswald, he voluntarily assumed all the blame, he was perfectly willing to take all the punishment; but, on the contrary, if *both* were discovered *in flagrante delicto*, and *he* only punished, then, at such injustice, he would fly into the most ungovernable fury, that would sometimes end in phrensy and congestion of the brain. It was these maniacal fits of passion that procured for him the soubriquet of Little Demon, conferred upon him by the negroes of the plantation, in opposition to that of Little Prince, given him by the visitors at the house.

Often, too, the boy gave evidence of reflection and of feeling, beyond his years; as, for instance, once, when he was but nine years old, a lady, who delighted in his childish beauty, grace, and wit, allowed him frequently to ride in the carriage with her, and accompany her, when making visits, or on going to places of amusement. One day, when she was gently stroking his silky curls, he suddenly dropt his head into his hands, and burst into tears.

"Why, Valley! what is the matter?" she asked, again caressing his beautiful head. But, at the gentle caress and the gentle tone, he wept more passionately than ever. "Why, Valley! what *is* the matter? Have I hurt your feelings? Have *any* of us hurt your feelings?" she asked, knowing his sensitive nature, and imagining that some thoughtlessness on her part, or on some one else's, might have wounded it. "Have any of us hurt your feelings, Valley?"

"Yes, you have! all of you have! and you do all the time!"

The lady laughed, for it struck *her* as very droll to hear such a charge from the spoiled and petted boy. But the boy went on to speak with warmth and vehemence—

"You all treat me like a little poodle dog, or like a mon-

Digitized by Google

key; for you feed me, and you dress me up, and pet me, and laugh at me, and by and by you will drive me out."

Another time, he was sitting in the parlor with a lady who had diverted herself a good deal with his precocious wit and intelligence, and had allowed him to play with the rings on her fingers, the bracelets on her wrists, and the pearls that bound her dark tresses, and then to follow her to the piano, and stand close by her side while she played and sang, until suddenly down dropped his head upon his hands, and he burst into a passion of tears. The lady broke off in astonishment, turned around, drew him up to her, took his hands from his face, and looked kindly at him, without saying a word. But the boy dropped upon the floor, and crouching, wept more vehemently than before. The lady stooped and raised his head, and laid it on her lap, and laid her hand soothingly upon his silken curls, but spoke no word. When his passion of tears had passed, and he had sobbed himself into something like composure, he looked up into her face, and said—

"You did not laugh at me, Mrs. Hewitt, and you didn't ask me what I was crying for; but I couldn't help it, because—because I know this good time will go away; and I shall get taller, and then you won't let me stay and hear you talk, and hear you sing, and—and—and—I wish I never *could* grow any taller. I wish I may die before I grow older."

Ah! poor, fated boy! would indeed, that he had died before he grew taller! before those evil days his childhood's prophet heart foretold!

But they came on apace.

The first trial that he suffered might seem light enough to an outside looker-on, but it was heavy enough to Valentine. When he was eleven years of age, and Oswald nine, Oswald was sent to school, and he remained at home.

Up to this time they had been playmates and companions,

Digitized by Google

faring alike in all respects, and sharing equally all pleasures, even the favors of the visitors.

Now, therefore, Valentine keenly felt the new state of things, which in more than one way deeply grieved his heart; first, in the separation from his friend and playmate, whom he dearly loved; and then in the denial of knowledge to his thirsting intellect, for there existed a statute law against educating a slave—a law, too, that was of late very strictly enforced, except in the case of children, who frequently transgressed it, and always with impunity; for slaves are often taught to read and write by their nurslings, the master's children.

Valentine was thus far kin to us all, that he was a lineal descendant of Eve, and inherited all her longing desire for forbidden knowledge. And, in like manner, Oswald had received a goodly portion of that Adamic propensity to do just precisely what he was commanded *not* to do.

No grief of Valentine could long be hid from Oswald, and it followed, of course, that when he discovered the great trouble of his playmate to be his desire for education, all that Oswald learned at school by day was taught to Valentine at home by night. And peace and good-will was once more restored to the boys.

Thus the time went on till the lads were fourteen and sixteen respectively.

Then Oswald was placed as a boarder at an Academy in a neighboring city. Before leaving home, Oswald had begged, prayed, and insisted upon Valentine being permitted to accompany him, and had finally gained his object—an almost unheard-of indulgence—but one, nevertheless, that could not be refused by the father to his cherished son. So Valentine, ostensibly as a servant, but *really* as friend and companion, accompanied Oswald to his school.

Here also Oswald took every opportunity to impart his acquired knowledge to his companion.

Digitized by Google

And now Valentine's taste in literature and art began to develop itself. His mind was by no means an "*omnium gatherem.*" Belle-lettres, rather than classic lore or mathematical science, was his attraction. Astronomy, botany, poetry, rhetoric, oratory, elocution, music, painting, and the drama—*these*, and other studies only in proportion as they related to these, were his delights. An æsthetic rather than a strong intellect distinguished him. A love of beauty, elegance, and refinement, in all things—in art, science, and the drama, as well as in his own person, dress, and surroundings—began to reveal itself. And those who did not understand or like Valentine, began to sneer at him for a *petit-maître* and a dandy.

A change began to creep over the relations between the youths. Oswald was no longer a boy, but a young man. He could no longer instruct his companion, because he would thereby render himself obnoxious to public opinion, as well as to the laws of the State, to which his age now made him responsible. Neither could he bear the good-humored jests and the ridicule of his schoolfellows, who bantered him unmercifully upon his friendship for his "man," calling them the foster-brothers, the Siamese twins, Valentine and Orson, &c.; and Valentine was beginning to suffer from the occasional slights, neglect, contempt, and inequality in temper of his young master, when fortunately the scene changed. Oswald was withdrawn from the Academy of M——, and sent to the University of Virginia, whither Valentine, as his valet, attended him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

THE MANIAC'S CURSE.

Life is before ye! Oh, if ye would look
Into the secrets of that sealed book,
Strong as ye are in youth and hope and faith,
Ye would sink down and falter, "Give us Death!"—*Fanny Kemble.*

Oswald Waring remained three years at the University of Virginia, and during the whole of that period he had not returned home once. The vacations had been spent at various Northern watering-places, to which he went, accompanied by his inseparable companion and valet, Valentine. His fellow-students at the University often warned him of what they called the reckless imprudence of taking his slave with him to the North, expressing their belief that one day the fellow would give him the slip. But Oswald laughed, in his reckless, confiding good humor, and declared, if the rascal could have the heart to leave him, he was perfectly welcome to do so, at the same time expressing his belief that the boy understood his true interests too well to do any thing of the sort. But the fact was, that Valentine loved his master much too well to leave him lightly.

Oswald Waring never distinguished himself at the University, or anywhere else, for any thing but good nature, generosity, and reckless extravagance. He never graduated; but at the close of his third year, being some months past his legal majority, he left the University finally, and went on a tour through the Northern States and Canada, before embarking for Europe. He was accompanied, as usual, by Valentine.

And the youth did not avail himself of that opportunity

Digitized by Google

to leave his master, perhaps from the fascination of their easy, careless, roving life, as well as the affection that bound them together.

Mr. Waring had reached New York, on his return from Canada, and was making a short stay in that city, previous to embarking for his European travels, when he received a letter from his father's attorney, Mr. Pettigrew, announcing the death of old Madame Waring, and the extreme illness of Colonel Waring, and pressing for the immediate return of his son.

Mr. Waring lost no time in commencing his homeward journey, and attended by his favorite, in less than a fortnight from the day of leaving New York, he reached the city near to which was his father's plantation.

But there fatal news met him. He was too late. The virulent fever of that latitude had quickly done its work; and Colonel Waring's funeral had taken place the week previous. As this result had been dreaded by Oswald, the shock of hearing of it lost half its force. There was nothing to do but to hasten to the plantation, to examine into the confused condition of affairs there. Leaving a note for Mr. Pettigrew to meet him there the next day, Oswald took a carriage, and, with Valentine by his side, drove rapidly out to the plantation. They were met by Phædra, who had been tacitly left in sole charge of the house, and who saluted her young master with grave respect, and greeted her long absent son with a silent pressure of the hand, deferring all expression of interest in or affection for Valentine, until they should be alone together.

The next morning Mr. Pettigrew arrived, and the examination of the condition of the estate of the deceased began.

The lawyer expressed his opinion that there was no will of his late client in existence; and, further, that none had ever been made by him.

Digitized by Google

Colonel Waring had never spoken to him, as his legal adviser, upon the subject, as he would have been likely to have done, had he contemplated making one. Colonel Waring was a hale, sanguine man, in the prime of life, and not likely to entertain the thought of the contingency of his own death. And the fever that terminated his existence had been too sudden in its attack and delirium—insensibility and death had followed with too fatal rapidity, to admit of such a possibility as his executing his will. However, a search for a possible one was instituted; the library, secretaries, bureau, strong boxes—in fact, the whole house was ransacked for a will, or some memento of one; but neither will, nor sign of will, could be discovered.

Perhaps the person most deeply interested in the search was Phædra. As soon as her quick intelligence discovered that there was a *doubt* relative to the existence of a will, her interest became intense. When coming into the house to attend her young master or the lawyer, she paused, loitered near them; and, whenever she was allowed to do so, she assisted in the search with a zeal not equalled by either of the others. And when at last this search was abandoned as fruitless, she looked so unutterably wretched, as she hurried from the room, that both gentlemen gazed after her in astonishment.

"Why, what is the matter with Phædra?" inquired Mr. Waring, looking interrogatively at the lawyer.

"She is disappointed, most probably."

"But in what respect? I do not understand."

"She was a favorite slave, was she not?"

"Yes—that is to say, she was a very faithful servant to my late father, and was very well treated. But what has that to do with it?"

"Why, that she probably expected to be left free by your father's will."

"And that accounts for her anxiety that the will should be found."

Digitized by Google

"I think so."

"What a fool that woman must be! Free indeed! Why should she want to be free?—at her age, too. What can be her object? What would she do if she *were* free? How in the world came she to get such an idea into her head? Who could have put it there, do you think?"

"No one, I suppose."

"But how should she ever think of such nonsense as her freedom?"

"It is a notion they all have, I believe?"

"A notion! I should think it was a notion, and a very foolish one, on her part; I am really half inclined to cure her of her folly by setting her free, and letting her try her freedom on, to see how it fits. Nothing but experience will teach ignorant creatures like herself."

"I've noticed, in the course of my practice, a good many such instances of folly as hers."

"They are, the best of them, a set of the dullest and most ungrateful ——. Now, I want to know if there are not hundreds of white women who would jump at such a situation as Phædra's?"

"Quite likely."

"Why, where could the fool be better off, or *freer*, if that's her whim? She is mistress of the house—absolutely to all intents and purposes, mistress of the house. All the money for domestic expenses passes through her hands; she carries the keys, governs the maids, and arranges every thing to suit herself."

"And her master, too, let us hope, sir."

"Yes, yes; I do not complain of her good management or her fidelity. In fact, I should be very unjust to do so, for she is every thing that I could desire in these respects. And to render exact justice in this tribute, I may say that it would be difficult, and, more than that, it would be impossible, to replace her. It is these considerations, you see,

Digitized by Google

that vex me so, when I hear of her hankering after her freedom. Freedom from *what*, I should like to know? In what respect does *her* position *now* differ from that of any respectable white woman, filling the situation of housekeeper?"

"Really, I wish the conversation had not arisen. Certainly, Phædra's absurd notions were not of sufficient importance to occupy so much of our attention. Now, then, to business."

And the lawyer and the heir were seen deep in the papers and accounts, which they found in such hopeless confusion as promised many weeks, if not months, and perhaps years, of legal and financial diplomacy to settle.

Phædra, when she had left the room in such a state of strange excitement, had hurried off in search of her son.

Valentine was in his master's chamber, surrounded by the trunks and boxes that had been sent after them from New York, and had but that day arrived. Half of them were opened and unpacked, and a part of their contents scattered all over the floor. They consisted of books, pictures, statuettes, vases, and other beautiful fancies, that Valentine had persuaded his master to collect in New York, during the visits he had made there while residing at the University of Virginia.

And in the midst of the picturesque and beautiful confusion, Valentine sat, reclining in an easy chair, fascinated, spell-bound by an illustrated volume of Shakspeare's plays. It was a new purchase of his master's, made evidently without his knowledge, for it came in a box of books direct from the bookseller, and that was now unpacked for the first time.

Valentine had taken the costly book from its double wrapper of coarse and of tissue paper, and merely meant to look at it before placing it in the bookcase; but that single look was fatal to his resolution for industry that morning,

Digitized by Google

for he threw himself back in his master's easy chair, and was soon deep in the spells of the magic volume.

Hour after hour passed, and there he sat, his body in his master's lounging chair, surrounded by the beautiful litter of books and pictures, statuettes and vases, flutes and eolian harps and other toys, and his spirit enchanted and carried captive by the master magician to attend the fortunes of King Lear. The spirit-music, of which his ear was still conscious, came not from the eolian harp in the window, that vibrated to the touch of the breeze, but from some old minstrel harper at the court of King Lear; and the perfume that filled the room came not from the magnolias of the grove outside, but from rare English flowers tended by Cordelia, for his soul was not in America in the nineteenth century, but in ancient Britain in the age of poetry and fable.

He was aroused from his day-dream by the entrance of Phædra, in more excitement than he had ever seen her betray.

Without a word spoken, she fell upon his neck, and, clasping him closely, burst into tears; then, quickly sinking down by his side, clasped his knees, dropped her head upon them, and wept convulsively.

Astonished and alarmed, Valentine tried to raise her, exclaiming,

"Mother! what is the matter? Mother! why, mother! what ails you? what has happened?"

But she clung around his knees, and buried her face, and wept as she had never wept before.

Using all his strength, the youth forcibly unclasped her arms, and got up, and raised her, and placed her in the chair that he had vacated.

"Now, mother, what is the matter?" he asked, bending affectionately over her.

"Oh, Valentine!" she said, as soon as she could speak for sobbing, "Oh, Valentine! after all, there is no will!"

Digitized by Google

"No will!" he repeated, in quiet perplexity, for he did not quite comprehend the cause of her excessive emotion. "No will, did you say, mother?"

"No! no! no! no!" she repeated, tearing her hair, "there is no will! although he promised—and I felt *sure* he'd keep his word—I never doubted it, because he was an honorable man, after his fashion—there was no will!"

"Well, my dear mother, what of that, that it should distress you so?"

"What of that? Oh, Valley! Valley! what a question!"

"Indeed, I do not know why you should take the non-existence of a will so much to heart, mother," he said soothingly.

"Oh, Valley! Valley! Master promised faithfully that he would leave *you* free, and leave you money to take you to France, or to some other foreign country. And he broke his word to me! Master broke his pledged word to me, who served his family so faithfully so many years. I didn't ask for freedom for myself, only for you!"

"Mother, *don't* take it to heart so! don't go on so, don't."

"Hush! hush! it is the Spanish woman's curse falling on us!—me! She cursed me, dying."

"My own dear mother, the curse recoiled upon her own head, for she died mad. It never reached you, who did not in any way deserve it. It was *you* that was wronged, not her, I am sure."

"Yes, yes, it *was* I that was wronged! It was I that was wronged! I came to my master with his other property—with his land, and with his negroes. I had no mother, for my mother died when I was but seven years old. I was brought up by an old negro, named Dinah. I was but fourteen years old when I came into the possession of my master, along with his patrimony."

"Don't look upon things in that light, mother; don't

Digitized by Google

talk in that wild, imbittered way," said Valentine, taking both her hands, and looking gently and fondly on her. But she snatched her hands away, and covered her face, and was silent for a while—then she spoke:

"I know it hurts you. I know it goes to your heart like a knife; but it is true, true as—as that I might have been tempted to take your life and my own, had I seen how this was to end!"

"I am very glad you did not, mother, I am sure."

"Will you always say so?"

"As I hope to be saved, yes, mother," replied the youth, half smiling, to raise her spirits.

"Ah, you think so now. Will you think so in the future?"

"Yes, mother! I will pledge you my word to think no other way forever, if that will satisfy you."

"Yet, oh, Valley! that Spanish woman's dying curse! It haunts me now upon this day of the fall of all my hopes for you; it haunts me, it hangs over me like a funeral pall! It oppresses and darkens all my soul!"

"My dear mother, don't be superstitious, if you do inherit a tendency in that direction from both sides of your ancestry. Forget that violent woman's curse; and whatever you do, don't make it fulfill itself, by believing in it. And believe that if any evil befall us, it will not have come from that angry woman's malediction. Why, if I thought that the imprecations of the angry and malignant could bring down curses from Heaven upon the heads of the innocent, I should turn Pagan, and worship beasts. Besides, as I said before, it was not *her*, but *you*, who was injured. And if any one could have had the right to utter maledictions, it was *you;* yet you never did it."

"No, Heaven forbid! I took things as a matter of course; and though my heart was almost broken, I made no complaint, far less ventured on any reproach; for I am sure I thought master would do no great wrong; and I

Digitized by Google

thought he acted much better than his neighbors, when he promised that you should be free, and should go to France, and learn a profession. But he broke that promise. Oh, he broke his pledged word and honor, and the woman's curse is surely falling."

"Think no more of that, mother; she had no power to curse you."

"I never did her harm, in deed, or word, or thought. I never deserved it from *her*, whatever I deserved from Heaven. It was the old Bible story of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar acted over again on this plantation, only this was a great deal worse, as I look upon it now, though then I thought it was all right, hard as it was to bear. I had been keeping house for master four years, and you were nearly a year old, when one winter he went to New Orleans, to spend a month or two. He stayed the whole winter. I did not know that he married there, for he never wrote to tell me, and I never read a newspaper. How should either happen, when I could not read nor write? Well, in the spring, instead of coming home, he sent a message with some directions to the overseer, but no word about his being married, only that he was going abroad for a while. Well, he went, and he stayed away for a year. And then he came home by way of New Orleans, where he stopped to buy furniture, that he sent up before him, in charge of an upholsterer, who was to fix it all up. But still no word of his marriage. I might have guessed something, from the refurnishing of the house; but I did not, because my heart was so taken up with the thought that master was coming home, and how nice every thing should be for him when he should come. I afterward knew that my master had written to Mr. Hewitt, to come over and tell me to prepare to meet my new mistress; but Mr. Hewitt, for the sake of what he called the joke, left me in ignorance, so that madam might

Digitized by Google

find me and you when she should come. Well, I don't want to talk any more about this. The afternoon that master was expected to arrive, I was on the watch. I was standing on the portico, holding you by the hand, when I saw the carriage approach. It came up very rapidly, and my heart beat thick and fast, as if it would suffocate me. I could not help it, Valley! When the carriage stopped, my master got out first, and handed out a lady, and led her up the stairs. And while the whole scene was swimming before me, he said to the lady, 'This is your maid, madame;' and to me, 'Phædra, attend your mistress.' I had no business to faint, I know, because I was only master's poor housekeeper, and I might have expected this thing that had happened; but it came so suddenly, so unexpectedly, and my heart had been beating so high only the minute before, that I could not help it. One single glimpse of her great, black eyes, and the sight left mine, and I fell, like a tree. You see this scar upon my forehead; it was where my head struck the sharp edge of the stone step, when I fell down. When I came to myself, I was in old Dinah's cabin. You were there too. I was very stupid from the blow I had received in falling, and could not more than half understand old Dinah's mumbled consolations. And I was almost as stupid the next morning, when my master paid me a visit, and stood there, and advised me not to be a fool, and asked me what I had expected—and told me that I had behaved very badly, very badly indeed; that he had hoped I had had more sense, and more regard for his comfort; but that I had acted abominably—I had spoiled his domestic peace for he did not know how long. That I had given madam such a shock on her first arrival, too, that he did not believe she could ever endure to look upon my face again; that she was in strong hysterics now; that I ought to have had more consideration for him, than to have brought him into so much trouble. But that women are a

Digitized by Google

great curse, any how, with their abominable selfishness and jealousy"——

"Stop, stop, mother!" gasped the boy, "I shall go mad, if you tell me more."

She raised her eyes and looked at him, and grew frightened at his looks. His face was gray, and his features haggard, with the struggle in his bosom. His hand clutched his breast as if to grapple with some hidden demon there.

After a while, Phædra resumed, softly and quietly—

"Hush! he was not naturally cruel. I never knew him to do a cruel thing wantonly or knowingly. But many people do not understand or make allowance for others who have naturally more tender hearts than theirs. He did not know how I felt"——

"Mother! mother! for Heaven's sake!"

"Dear Valley, let me go on and tell this story for the first and last time. I felt that I had to tell it some day; the day is come; let me finish—finish for my own justification, for I would be justified to you. Well, I never entered the lady's presence again, of course, *and, from that day to this, was only my master's faithful servant, and no more.* As soon as I was able to travel, my master sent me with you into the town to hire out. I found a good place, where we lived several years. I never even saw my master's face all the time, but strange reports went around, notwithstanding. People said that Colonel Waring and his lady lived very unhappily together; that they quarrelled very often; that she was mad with jealousy of the Mestizza; that every time the Colonel came in town, there would be a dreadful scene upon his return home. At last it is certain that my master left off visiting the city altogether, and did all his business there by deputies. But the lady's attacks of passion or hysterics became periodical, returning at regular intervals, and in the course of the first year she became a

Digitized by Google

confirmed lunatic. Before the end of the second year, it became necessary to put her under restraint. Finally, she was taken to a Northern lunatic asylum, in the hope of cure, and there, at the end of a few months, she died raving mad, and hurling down imprecations upon me. It was generally reported *then*, as now, that jealousy had driven her mad; but it was not true—Heaven knows that it was not true, any more than it was true that she had a just cause for her jealousy. For if ever I saw insanity in any creature, I saw it in her great staring eyes the first and only time I ever set mine upon her face. No; jealousy did not cause her madness, but her madness caused her jealousy!"

Phædra paused, and, with her head bent upon her hand, remained silent some moments; then she resumed:

"When that unfortunate lady had been dead some time, and one nurse after another had been intrusted with the care of her child, and had failed to give satisfaction, my year at last being up with my city employer, my master took me home, to mind Master Oswald. It was the first time I had seen the baby, although he had come home with his mother, and was in the carriage with his nurse at the very time that she first set her foot upon the threshold of her new home. Master Oswald was about two years old when I first took charge of him; and if my heart had been ever so seared and hardened, it could not but have been touched at the sight of that motherless infant—so puny, neglected, and suffering, as he looked. Well, I took care of him—Heaven knows I did—excellent care of him, or he would not be living now. But he doesn't remember that. How should he, indeed, when even his father did not remember it, although many, many times, when he saw how his heir thrived under my care, he would praise me, and promise me such great things for my own poor boy. Well, I was sure he would keep his word. He has not

Digitized by Google

done so; and I could find it in my heart to pray for both your death and mine!" exclaimed Phædra, with a short, sudden sob, as if she were on the eve of another burst of violent emotion.

"Do not grieve, mother; Mr. Waring has not done ill by us, I am sure. I have had as happy a life with him as my own nature will permit. I could not have borne life with a master less good-natured and tolerant. In truth, if our mutual relations had been reversed, I fear that I should not have been so uniformly kind as he. In fact, barring a little selfishness, where his habits and personal comforts are concerned, he is one of the very kindest of men. You know how he has regarded us both, from his boyhood"——

"Until he left home—he changed to us from that time."

"Only for a while, when he was at school, and his classmates laughed at him for his attachment to me, and he grew angry and ashamed to show it; *now* he is his old self again. And, mother, there is but one obstacle to his realizing for us the hopes his father disappointed."

"And what is that, Valentine?"

"His affection for us both, that has in it a certain alloy of selfishness, as, indeed, many other people's affections for others also have. He loves us both, in a different way; and he loves his own conforts in us. He would not like to lose his faithful, motherly housekeeper, or his confidential, attached valet; or that either the one or the other should have the power to leave him at will. Ah, mother, I can understand Master Oswald better than any one else in the world can. I can read his heart like an open book; and, moreover, I can in most things wind him around my finger like a string. Look at these things. Why do you suppose he collected them? *He* doesn't care for any thing like this, but I delight in them, and so I persuaded him to collect them to adorn *his* rooms. I did not do so for my own

Digitized by Google

gratification alone, but that I really did wish to see him cultivate a refined taste. Now, we are soon going to Europe. Why? Do you think *he* wished to go at first? No; he never would have thought of it. It would have been a great deal too much trouble to take the lead in such a plan, but I thought he ought to make the grand tour, like other young men of fortune; besides which, I had a desire to travel myself. So I persuaded him that a gentleman of fashion (as he desires to be thought, you know) ought to see Europe. So we go! Why, bless his easy, good-natured heart, I have such great power over him—may I never abuse it!—that ninety-nine days out of a hundred it is *I* who am master!"

"But the *hundredth* day, Valentine!"

The boy's face suddenly changed.

"I had rather not think of that, mother," he said, in an altered voice.

Phædra's face also changed. It was as if a thunder cloud had suddenly crossed the sun, and darkened all the room. The mother spoke first, and her voice was deep and hollow, as she said—

"Valentine! Valentine! you have said that in ninety-nine days out of a hundred you can govern your master. Oh, my son! pray God to give you grace on that hundredth day to *govern yourself!*"

"Mother! Mother! Why do you say that to me?" exclaimed the boy, with a shudder.

"I do not know why—or if I do, I dare not tell you. A heavy weight is on my heart; I cannot shake it off. You are going away soon! I must warn you now; I may not have another chance, or may not feel able to do it. Oh, Valentine, learn *self-control*, try to keep your temper always under. Ay! seek the grace of God; there *is* such a thing, though your poor mother has not got it, and only wishes she had. Seek it, Valentine—it is your best safety;

Digitized by Google

in every time of trial and temptation, it is a stedfast support. I know it, though I haven't got it; I know it, because I've seen it in many others."

Valentine was looking at her with the most intent expression of countenance.

"Anger is a short madness, is it not, mother? So it was with me, at least, when I was a boy; and how those phrensies of passion, into which I would be thrown, used to terrify me when I came to my senses! I used to be haunted with a fear that, in some such mad and blind fury, I might"——

"Hush! oh, hush! Pray to God!" exclaimed Phædra, turning pale.

"Well, but of late years I have been able to control myself, and have also suffered less provocation."

"Ah, yes; less provocation."

"Well, mother, I will promise you, faithfully, at least, to exercise habitual self-control. As for your other subject of anxiety, be at rest. Oswald Waring has his fits of generosity, in which even his sensual love of his own comforts is forgotten. And I shall take advantage of one of those moods to procure our manumission—not that I am sure I shall leave him, even after that is obtained."

All that is necessary to record of their conversation ended here. In a few minutes after, Phædra left the chamber to attend to her domestic affairs.

In the course of a few weeks, Mr. Waring hurried the completion of all the business to which his personal attention was indispensable; and then, attended by Valentine, he set out for his European travels, leaving the further settlement of his estate in the hands of Mr. Pettigrew.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

THE BOTTLE DEMON.

Oh! that men should put an enemy in
Their mouths to steal away their brains; that we
Should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause,
Transform ourselves into beasts!
Oh! thou invisible Spirit of wine,
If thou hast no name to be known by,
Let us call thee Devil! *Shakspeare.*

AFTER an absence of fifteen months, Oswald Waring and his inseparable companion, Valentine, returned home.

Not in all respects was the master or the man improved by travel, as circumstances soon demonstrated.

Mr. Waring brought back the same benevolent, careless, mirthful, yet occasionally arrogant temper, that had always distinguished him; and Valentine, the same affectionate, aspiring, quick, inflammable nature, that made his conduct so uncertain.

The character of Oswald might have been easily read in his personal appearance. He was a rather handsome specimen of a pure Anglo-Saxon; he was of medium height, of a stout and well-set form; with a round head, smooth, white, receding forehead, shaded with thickly clustering curls of auburn hair; prominent, clear, light-blue eyes, whose prevailing expression was that of frank mirthfulness; a straight nose; a well-curved, but rather sensual mouth; and a full, rounded chin, that, altogether, made up a countenance whose chief characteristics were good nature, sensuality, and gayety. His dress was equally remarkable for the costliness of its material and the negligence of its arrangement; and left the point at issue,

Digitized by Google

whether the costume were the more extravagant or the more slovenly. His manners were marked by habitual cheerfulness, good temper, and love of merriment. And, though he rarely emitted a flash of wit, he was ever the quickest to appreciate that gift in others; and it must have been a dull jest, indeed, that *his* ready laugh did not hail. And it is not unlikely that to his sincere, hearty, contagious laughter, he owed a great deal of his popularity among men, and women too. For who does not love a good laugher?

Valentine was in almost every respect the antipodes of his master, yet resembled him in this, that *his* nature also might be easily read in his dark but singularly beautiful face. I use the term "beautiful" instead of the other term "handsome" advisedly, as more proper to the subject under description. Valentine was rather below the medium height, and slightly but elegantly formed, with a stately little head, delicate aquiline features, a complexion dark as a Spaniard's, bluish-black hair falling in many well-trained curls around the dark face, and light-blue eyes so deeply vailed under their thicket of long close lashes, that it was only in moments of excitement, when they suddenly lightened, that their strange, startling, almost terrible contrast to the blackness of the hair and darkness of the skin could be noticed. In the matter of dress, Valentine was fastidious to a degree. In other circumstances, he might have been an exquisite and a *petit maître*, as his master often laughingly called him. As it was, the youth was undeniably a dandy; but his love of dress was to be attributed fully as much to his innate love of order, beauty, and propriety, as to his coxcombry. His fine raven-black hair—his "favorite vanity," was carefully kept, and trained to fall in those faultless ringlets; and it is upon record, that when the owner was not in fall dress, that "splendid head of hair" was carefully bound down from injury by sun or dust, under a double silk

Digitized by Google

bandanna, arranged in the graceful folds and twists of a Turkish turban. Valentine's "foppery" was a never-failing source of merriment to his fun-loving master—though I think the boy's love of dress could scarcely with fairness be called foppery, since he was never known to try the effects of his most elegant toilet upon the hearts of any of the young girls of his class, until his own heart was seriously engaged. Valentine's deportment was characterized by habitual pensiveness and reserve, occasionally broken by sudden unaccountable fits of excitement, strange flights of fancy, and startling, frightful paroxysms of passion, having many of the features of incipient insanity. These were undoubtedly to be attributed to the antagonistic constituents of his nature. What alchemy but the all-powerful grace of God could ever harmonize the discordant elements of a being deriving his descent from three races so different as the Indian, the Negro, and the Saxon, and reconcile him to the position in which this boy was placed?

Mr. Waring, soon after his return home, began to lead a wild, reckless life. He kept bachelor's hall at Red Hill, in extravagant style.

Frequent dinners, suppers, and wine parties, with cards, billiards, dice, &c., converted the quiet old country house into a scene of wild midnight orgies, with drinking, song-singing, and gambling, that threatened soon to leave the young spendthrift without a house to revel in, or a dollar to revel on.

And almost every day, when there was not a party at the house, Valentine would have to drive his master in the buggy to the town. Upon such occasions, the master would go to some favorite restaurant or billiard saloon, or perhaps to some wine or card party, to which he had been invited, while the man would take the buggy to the livery stable, and lounge about town until the small hours of the morning when he would rouse the sleepy groom at the stables, get

Digitized by Google

his buggy and horse, and take his master home. Sometimes Mr. Waring would be slightly elevated by the wine he had drank, but never to the degree of intoxication.

At first, and for a long while, Valentine resisted the temptations of the life into which he was led; but, in the course of time, those listless hours of waiting in town wore away his good habits; and it at last happened that, while the master was gambling and drinking in some splendid saloon, the man would be imitating him in some humbler scene of dissipation. And when he would have to drive Mr. Waring home, it not unfrequently happened that both were under the influence of wine.

To poor Phædra, who happily had some time since found that grace of God that she had so long and humbly and earnestly desired, this conduct in her young master and her son gave the greatest distress and anxiety. With Valentine she often and earnestly expostulated; and the impressible boy, for boy he continued to be to the day of his death, would promise with tears in his eyes, to amend. Even with Oswald Waring, using the privilege of the old nurse, she ventured to reason, faithfully, fearlessly, sorrowfully.

But, in his thoughtless, good-humored way, he laughed in her face, called her a well-meaning old woman, but advised her to attend to her own concerns.

Yet Phædra did not slacken in making what poor opposition she could to the approach of ruin.

It was not the least deplorable and dangerous feature in the mutual relations of Oswald Waring and his favorite slave, that their mutual positions aften seemed temporarily reversed. Valentine would, upon occasions, seem, or really for the hour *be*, the leader, and Oswald the follower.

Unfortunately, Mr. Waring was singularly wanting in those qualities that command habitual respect from inferiors; nay, he even lacked self-respect, and the dignity that it gives; while, more unhappily still, his servant Valentine

Digitized by Google

possessed a large share of self-esteem, that, in his excitable nature, would, under provocation or temptation, rise to insufferable insolence. And this frequently placed them in false and trying attitudes toward each other. It was a baleful circumstance, too, that when, under the effects of wine, the master fell from easy good-nature into maudlin tenderness and sentimentality, varied by eccentric impulses of domineering authority, all of which was extremely distasteful and irritating to the servant, whose pride, instigated by the like baleful spirit, would rise to an intolerable arrogance. It was a situation full of dire bodency to both.

It happened one evening that Valentine had driven Mr. Waring into town to be present at a wine and card party. It was late at night, or speaking more accurately, early in the morning, when they were returning home. It was difficult to say which of the two was most excited. Mr. Waring was in his most maudlin mood of familiarity, Valentine in his most insolent humor. Each perceived the intoxication of the other, without being conscious of his own state. Oswald broke out in a bacchanalian song, which he sung all wrong, and by snatches—occasionally, in a sudden fit of maudlin affection, varying the performance by throwing his arm around his servant, and hugging him closely. Valentine bore this once, but, the second time it was repeated, he shook his master's arm off, exclaiming, "I am not one of your companions." But Oswald laughed aloud, rolling himself from side to side, and breaking out into another low song—

"Life is all a wariorum,
And we cares not how it goes!"

"You will frighten the horses presently. Can't you behave yourself with common decency?" exclaimed Valentine, shaking off the hand that had been laid upon his shoulder.

Digitized by Google

"Let them talk about decorum,
As has characters to lose,"

sang the inebriate, chuckling and slapping the boy upon the back.

"If you do not be quiet, I'll get out of this buggy, and leave you to drive home as you can," said Valentine, impatiently.

This seemed to amuse the other very much; he burst out into a peal of laughter, falling back, and clasping his knees, and rolling with the tipsy enjoyment of the joke. When he had laughed himself into a fit of the hiccoughs, and hiccoughed himself into comparative calmness, he still seemed to enjoy the drollery of the idea, and recommenced laughing and singing by fits, and slapping Valentine upon the back.

"I tell you, if you do not quit this, I will get out!" exclaimed the boy angrily. "*You* a gentleman!"

This language, instead of rousing Oswald to anger, seemed to strike him as the drollest of speeches, for he fell back into another peal of laughter; and when he had recovered himself he began, not in displeasure, but in a maudlin, jesting way, and with a very thick utterance, to taunt Valentine:

"Why, you ins'lent f'low, do you know who you're talking to? You're a spoiled negro—that is what *you* are! Now, don't you know, if I wa'n't the most forgivin' f'low in the world, that I'd have you tied up and whipt for such language?"

"ME!"

It is utterly impossible to convey in words any idea of the fierce, savage, almost demoniac glare of hatred and defiance with which that single monosyllable was uttered. But it was lost upon the tipsy master, who replied, nodding and chuckling—

"*Yes, you*, my little fellow! and I think it will have to be done, too, to bring you to a sense of your condition.

Digitized by Google

Sit down, sir! What the devil do you mean by standing up and looking at me in that way?"

Valentine had risen to his feet, still unconsciously holding the reins, but no longer guiding the horses, who went on their own way, while he stood and glared at his master, with an almost maniacal light blazing from those pale gray eyes.

"Sit down, sir, I say! What the h—ll do you mean? Sit down, I say, or, by the Lord Harry, I'll do as I've threatened!"

This is not a proper scene to go on with. Both were mad with wine, and one also with rage. The master, though not angry, nor by any means disposed to punish, grew every moment, from very wantonness, more taunting in his manner—the man became each instant more insolent; words rose higher between them; Valentine grew frenzied, dashed his clenched fist with all his strength into his master's face, and sprang from the buggy, leaving him to his fate.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

AN HUMBLE WEDDING.

Habitual evils change not on a sudden,
But many days must pass, and many sorrows;
Conscious remorse and anguish must be felt,
To curb desire, to break the stubborn will,
And work a second nature in the soul,
Ere virtue can resume the place she lost.

Rowe's Ulysses.

VALENTINE awoke, the next morning, with a heavy weight upon his heart, and a thick cloud over his brain.

The first fact that attracted his attention was the circumstance that he was not in his own apartment, but in his mother's bed-chamber. A small wood fire was burning in the fire-place, and a tea-kettle was hanging over the blaze; the red hearth was neat and bright, and the only window was darkened by the lowered paper blind.

Phædra sat in her flag-bottomed elbow-chair, at the chimney corner; her work was on her lap, but she sat with her hands clasped upon it in idleness, and in an attitude of deepest grief. Such was the picture immediately before him.

He could not tell the hour, but supposed it to be near mid-day. He strove, through the aching of his head and heart, to recall the latest events of his waking consciousness, before he had fallen into the sleep or the insensibility from which he had just recovered. And, as memory came back in a rushing flood, bringing the hideous phantoms of the previous night's history, overcome with shame and sorrow, he groaned aloud, and buried his face in the pillow. Still he was in ignorance of what had occurred after he had

Digitized by Google

sprung from the buggy; and in terror for what might have happened to Mr. Waring, whom he had left there to guide as he could, in a state of extreme intoxication, the frightened and rearing horses.

Phædra arose, and approached the bed.

"Mother! tell me what has happened, for I remember nothing after getting home," said the boy, in a voice half smothered in emotion.

But Phædra sank down by the bed-side, buried her face in the coverlid, and sobbed.

"Mother! tell me the worst at once. Was he thrown out? Is he dead?" asked Valentine, in a deep, breathless, husky voice, as he raised upon his elbow, and leaned forward, his light eyes, from the tangled thicket of his dark hair, turning upon her like coals at a white heat.

"No, no, he is not dead. But it was a very narrow escape. Oh! Valley, such a good Providence, my boy," she said, taking his disengaged hand, and hugging it closely to her bosom, and weeping over it, as if that hand had been saved from some great calamity.

"Tell me all about it, mother."

But Phædra was sobbing and choking, and could not utter a word more then.

"Where is he now, mother?" asked Valentine, after a little while.

"In his room—unable to rise, but out of danger, the doctor says."

A few more minutes passed in silence. Phædra rose and resumed her chair and her needlework, though the sudden sobs and deep heavings of her bosom betrayed the storm of grief still beating.

"Mother," said Valentine, after a few moments longer, "can you tell me now all about it? How did I get home? How did he? What happened to the buggy?"

"Oh, Valentine, first of all, you came home in a state

Digitized by Google

that made my heart sick to see. I can't tell you how; but I hope never to see the like again. I could not have got you up stairs without help, but I managed to get you in here, and to bed, without any one seeing you."

"Mother"——

This single word, uttered in a tone of deepest regret, and humiliation; and then his voice broke down, and he covered his face with his hands.

"I had not more than got you to bed, when a violent barking of the dogs startled me, and I went out, and found it was master that Mr. Hewitt's niggers had brought home on a door. Dr. Carter, who was coming home from a night call, had found him lying on the side of the road, that runs along by Mr. Hewitt's cotton field. And he had ridden up to Mr. Hewitt's house, and roused up the old gentleman and some of the niggers; and they took a barn door off its hinges, and spread a bed and laid him on it, and brought him home. It was well that it happened to be Dr. Carter who found him; for he stayed with him all night, and that has been the means of saving his life. Oh, Valley, it was such a kind Providence that saved him!" said Phædra, breaking off suddenly, and clasping her hands.

"And this morning, mother?" said Valentine, anxiously.

"Oh! This morning the horses were found near the stables, with a part of the gearing hanging to their necks; and the buggy was found on the road, broken all to pieces."

"I dont't mean them—I mean Mr. Waring."

"He is out of danger this morning, as I told you before. He was stunned and very much bruised, by being thrown from the buggy, but not otherwise injured."

"What does he say about the accident?"

"He says he doesn't know much about it. He says he supposes he must have been taking too much wine, and that the horses got unruly, and he couldn't manage them;

Digitized by Google

and that was how they threw him out, and broke the carriage."

"Mother! I must get up, and go to him now!" said Valentine, hastily.

"Oh, stop! Stay one moment, Valentine! Lay there, and let me speak to you! I have been praying for you all night, in master's room, here, wherever I have been. Reflect, have you no thanks to offer to the Lord for his providential care, when you so little deserved it? And no sorrow, Valentine, for what has passed, and no promises to make for the future? Oh, Valentine, how is this course, you and your master have begun, going to end?"

"Mother! for my own part, I can affirm that this is the first time I ever was in such a state as you saw me in last night. All I feel about it, shall be *said* in this one oath—I will never taste intoxicating drink again, so help me Heaven; and shall be *proved* every day of my life, in the way I keep it!" exclaimed Valentine, impetuously, earnestly, tearfully.

Phædra grasped his hand once more, and hugged it to her heart; and prayed "God bless" him.

"And now, mother, I must get up and go to him."

Phœdra brought his clothes from the closet in which she had put them, and then left the room, while Valentine arose and dressed himself, and went to his master's apartments. It was in painful doubt and humiliating embarrassment that he sought Oswald Waring's presence. He got to the door, knocked, and at the words, "Come in," he entered.

Mr. Waring was in bed, and looking very pale and ghastly; and as Valentine saw him, a pang shot through his heart at the thought that, but for the merciful intervention of Providence in averting the consequences of his own rash anger, Oswald Waring might have been lying there—not a sick man, but a dead one! And a secret vow to for-

Digitized by Google

sake intemperance, in all its forms, material and moral, was made in Valentine's mind, and registered in Heaven.

"Is that you, Valley, old fellow? I had begun to fear that you had suffered more than myself, when I asked after you this morning, and they told me you were sick. Were you thrown out also?"

"Good Heaven!" thought Valentine, as a new light burst upon him; "he does not recollect what happened. He must have been much further gone than myself."

"Well, old fellow, why don't you answer me? I asked you if you were thrown out. Don't be afraid to tell me, for you see I'm a great deal better; besides, seeing you there alive and well, I shall not be much shocked to hear of what *might* have happened, you know. Come! where were you pitched, and how much were you hurt, and who picked you up? Tell me, for I can't get the least satisfaction out of anybody here."

"I was not thrown out—I sprang out."

"When the horses were rearing? A bad plan that, Val.; that is, if you really did it as you think you did. For my part, I doubt if you know any thing more about it than I do myself; and if my soul were to have to answer for my memory, I could not tell whether I jumped out or was thrown out. Bad course we've been pursuing, old boy; like to have cost us both our lives; really *has* cost me that beautiful buggy, that is ruined, they tell me. Bad course; bad course, Val. Not safe for master and man both to be glorious at the same time. Another evening, old fellow, do you try to keep sober, when you think it likely that *I* shall be—*otherwise*."

"I never mean to touch another drop of intoxicating drink as long as I live, sir, so help me Heaven!" said Valentine, fervently.

"Oh, pooh, pooh! old fellow. Resolutions made with a bad headache, the day after a frolic, are as worthless as

Digitized by Google

the oaths sworn in wine the night previous, both being the effects of an abnormal state of the soul and—*stomach*. Now, wine is a good thing in moderation—it is only a bad thing in excess. Don't look so dreadfully downcast, old fellow, nor make such dismally lugubrious resolutions. 'The servant is not greater than his master,' says the good Book; and, if *I* was overtaken, how could *you* expect to escape? Give me your honest fist, old fellow; those who have had such a d—d lucky escape together might shake hands upon it, I should think," said Oswald Waring, offering his hand.

Valentine took it and squeezed it, and then, in the warmth of his affectionate nature, pressed it to his heart, while tears welled to his eyes—tears, that came at the thought how nearly he had occasioned the death of this man—this man who, with all his faults, had, from their boyhood, been ever kind, generous, forbearing—more like a brother than a master. All that was unjust and galling in their mutual relations was forgotten by Valentine at that moment; he only remembered that they had been playmates in childhood, companions in youth, and friends always, up to the present, and that he had narrowly escaped causing Oswald's death; and, in the ardor and vehemence of emotion, he pressed the hand that had been yielded up to him, to his heart, exclaiming, in a broken voice—

"It was my fault, Master Oswald, all my fault! but I will never—never touch any sort of intoxicating liquor again—never, as the Lord hears me."

"Oh, tut, tut! you best fellow that ever was in the world! Who asks you for any such promises? Only promise that when there is a wine supper or card party in the wind, or any other signs of the times in the sky to warn you, you will take care to keep sober, knowing that I shall be likely to be something else. Wine is a good servant, but a bad master."

Digitized by Google

"Not good for me, ever, Master Oswald; certainly not good for me; probably not so for *you*, either."

"Come, come; you exceed your license, Valentine. *You're* a pretty fellow to preach to me, after nearly breaking my neck. However, that's ungenerous, after once forgiving you; so we'll say no more about it forever. But don't preach to me, whatever you do. Phædra nearly wears my patience out."

"Can I do any thing to make you more comfortable, or to help the time along?"

"N-o-o, I think not. Dr. Carter says I must keep quiet, and my head begins to ache now; so you had better darken the room, and leave me to rest."

Valentine closed all the shutters, and let down all the curtains, and then asked—

"Shan't I sit here, Master Oswald, to be at hand in case you should want any thing?"

"No! Lord, no! it must be a d—l of a bore to sit in a dark room, with no better amusement than to watch somebody going off to sleep. No; go and take care of yourself, old fellow. I can ring, if I should want any thing," said Oswald, cheerfully.

"Always so very considerate when he is in his right mind," thought Valentine, as he took the tasselled end of the bell-rope and put it in reach of his master's hand, before leaving the room.

That was the last time that Valentine saw his master in his right mind for many weeks. The effects of his fall, acting upon a system weakened and vitiated by dissipation, was much more serious than any one had foreseen. Before night, a brain fever, with delirium, had set in, and, for days after the life of Oswald Waring hung upon the feeblest chance. For many weeks of his illness, Phædra and Valentine nursed him with the most devoted affection. Poor Phædra prayed constantly for his recovery, and also for his

Digitized by Google

reform, and solicited every Sabbath the prayers of the congregation of her church in his behalf. And Valentine, in deep despair, daily accused himself of his master's death, as if he had purposely stricken a fatal blow, and Oswald were already dead. The long days and nights of watching by the side of the sick bed, that might at any hour become a death-bed, were very fruitful in good to Valentine. There he learned to hate and dread the demon anger, that had caused him so much misery; there he came to listen with patience and reverence to his poor mother's tearful pleadings and counsels; there he began to pray. It was six weeks before Mr. Waring left his room, and one more before he was fully restored to health. And this brought midsummer, a season that camp-meetings were frequent in the neighborhood.

This summer there was much greater excitement than ever before among the religious revivalists. The Rev. Mr. M—— and several others, equally eloquent and successful field preachers, were making a circuit of the country. Their fame always preceded them as an *avant courier*, and crowds congregated to hear them.

There was a camp-meeting held, by permission of the owner, in a magnolia grove where there was a fine spring, upon the grounds of Mr. Hewitt, Mr. Waring's nearest neighbor. And it was given out that on Sunday morning the eloquent field preacher M—— would address the assembled multitudes. There was a great deal of excitement and anticipation among all classes in that quiet rural district; and when the Sabbath came, congregations forsook their own churches, and assembled to hear M——. Crowds after crowds gathered; some went with the avowed purpose of getting converted; some to get revived; many to get excited; and most from motives of idle curiosity. Poor Phræda went for the candidly expressed purpose of being warmed and comforted. Valentine went to drive his master, who went only to kill a dull day.

Digitized by Google

Now, not only was Phædra praying with all her soul's strength for her son's conversion, but naturally that desired consummation was one of the most likely things in the world to eventuate; for Valentine's nature was just the one to be most deeply affected and impressed by the magnetic power of a man like M——, and he was also in the most favorable mood for receiving such impressions. And while hundreds around him were swayed, as by a mighty wizard's wand, under the wonderful eloquence of the most potent preacher since the days of Wesley and Whitefield, Valentine was deeply and almost fearfully excited.

And from that Sabbath, during the whole time of Mr. M——'s sojourn in the neighborhood, the boy was a regular attendant upon his ministry, and in the end was numbered among his converts. This is not the place to call in question the Rev. Mr. M——'s sincerity or consistency as a Christian; those who knew him best, believed him to be perfectly sincere in his religious enthusiasm, however inconsistent was sometimes his conduct. And though it may be true that some of his converts were his *only*, and not God's, as they afterward demonstrated by their backsliding, yet it is equally true that many shining lights in the Christian Church at this day ascribe their first awakening to Christian life, under Divine Providence, to the electric power of M——'s eloquence. At the time that I write of, the people of that neighborhood adored him as an angel sent from God; though some years after, the same people hunted him as a wild beast, from village to village, until old, poor, ill, and exhausted, he died alone—a fugitive from their insane wrath. But to return.

M—— had succeeded in reviving the religious spirit of that district; and when he departed, he left behind him many new but zealous laborers in that vineyard of the Lord.

Among the most enthusiastic in the field of the colored

Digitized by Google

mission of Magnolia Grove was Valentine. His sincere, ardent, earnest soul; his natural gift of eloquence; his sympathy with those in his own condition, if not strictly of his own race; his better education, and even his beauty of person, grace of manner, and sweetness of voice, all combined to make him the most popular and effective, and best beloved of all the class-leaders in the colored mission of Magnolia Grove. "Brother Valentine's" class was the largest and most important in the church. If ever Brother Valentine was announced to address the meeting upon any given day, there was sure to be a crowded house. And if ever Phædra held a prayer meeting in her quarter, there was sure to be a crowd to hear Brother Valentine speak.

Among the most zealous of the church members, and among those who never failed to be present at Phœdra's weekly prayer meetings, was a young and pretty quadroon, named Fannie. She was a free girl and an orphan, and was employed as shop girl in a hair dresser's and fancy store kept by a respectable old French couple in the city of M. But though her home and her business was in town, and there were also two or three "colored missions" in that place, yet Fannie preferred to walk out every Sunday morning to the little log meeting-house in Magnolia Grove. And those who were envious of Fannie's beauty did not scruple to say that she came out so far for the sake of hearing Brother Valentine pray or exhort, or to let him hear *her* sing; for Fannie had a voice that might have made her fortune, had she been white, and had it been cultivated. However that might be, Phædra loved Fannie as if she had been her own daughter, and she always took her home from meeting, to dine and spend the afternoon at Red Hill. And after an early tea, Valentine always walked home with Fannie to the city.

It is also true that Valentine became a frequent customer at Leroux's the hair-dresser's and fancy store where Fannie

Digitized by Google

was employed; and as Valentine not only made his own but also his master's purchases, and as he had a *carte blanche* for the same, his custom was of no trifling importance to the establishment. But valuable as was this patronage, as soon as the proprietors began to suspect the nature of the attraction to their store, they felt it to be their duty to warn the young girl, which they would do in something like these terms.

"Take my advice, Fannie, and send that young fellow about his business; he may be a very good young man, I dare say; but he is a slave, and never will be able to do any thing for you," Monsieur Leroux would say.

"You are free, Fannie; and you are very pretty, and all that; and you might look a great deal higher than that," would say Madame Leroux.

"Think, *ma fille*, if you take him, you will always have yourself and your family to support, for you never can have any help from a slave husband"—thus Monsieur Leroux.

"Consider, *mon enfant*, if you marry him, he may be sold away next year, or next month, even! How would you like that?" thus Madame Leroux.

And Fannie would blush, or smile, or pout, or drop a tear, or say *to herself*—

"Poor Valley! May be something may happen to set him free! May be *I* might work hard, and save money enough to"—she could not bring herself to say *buy*—"ransome him! And, anyhow, it is not *his* fault if he is not free. And it must be hard enough, the dear knows, to be as he is, without my letting him think that it makes any difference to me."

Obstacles and objections which, to cooler-hearted and clearer-headed people would seem very formidable, if not entirely conclusive, were but slight impediments in the way of these humble lovers.

Long courtships and protracted engagements are not

Digitized by Google

common among quadroons, and in this case were not favored by Valentine. He had won little Fannie's heart and consent to speak to her employers, who having advised her against the match, and holding no authority to go further in their opposition, gave a reluctant consent, with their good wishes and blessing.

Valentine had, all through the courtship, the hearty approbation of Phædra; and, lastly, he had none but his master to consult.

Mr. Waring rallied Valentine unmercifully upon his intended marriage; swore that, seriously, it was a pity such a fine young fellow as himself, who was such a favorite among the girls, should leave his gay bachelor's life, to tie himself down to a wife and family; asked him what he should do for kid gloves and perfumery, if he had to give all his pocket money to Fannie and the children; and finally made him a wedding present of a hundred dollars, and advised him to go out and hang himself.

In the following Christmas holydays, the slaves' annual Saturnalia in the South, the marriage of Valentine and Fannie took place. A mad marriage it was, where the bride had no dower, and the bridegroom not even the ownership of his own limbs to work for their support. An impossible marriage it would seem, had it not really taken place, and did we not know, for a certainty, that such marriages between the free and the enslaved frequently take place.

Phædra gave a serious little Methodist wedding, and invited all her favorite brethren and sisters of the church to be present. And the young master loaned his dining-room for the occasion, and invited himself to do the lovers the honor of his personal attendance at the marriage ceremony. And he gave the little bride two testimonials of his friendly consideration—one in the form of a pretty wedding dress, that was gratefully received; the other in the

Digitized by Google

guise of a hearty embrace and kiss, that was not quite so thankfully accepted.

"But now, Mommer," whispered little Fannie, in the course of the evening, to Phædra, "Valley's young master has been so very kind and generous to us all, s'pose now he was to make Valley a present of his free papers, for a wedding gift to-night—to surprise us, you know; to see how delighted we'd all be, and to hear what we'd say. I think he might; 'deed, I shouldn't wonder if he did, only for the pleasure of the thing, you know. Should you, Mommer?"

Phædra sighed; but, then, not to damp the girl's spirits, she replied—"He may do that some day, honey."

"Something seems to whisper to me that he is thinking of it to-night, Mommer! Ah! the Lord send he may! Wouldn't we be happy? Valley would have a place in the same store with me; it would suit him, too; he has so much good taste! And then we could have such a pretty little home of our own! 'Deed, I believe he is thinking about it now. Look at him. I shouldn't be the least surprised to see him call Valley aside, and clap him on the shoulder, and call him 'old fellow,' and tell him he is a free man!"

The girl had read aright the thoughts of the master. Angels, who saw the future, with all the phantoms of its bright or dark possibilities—angels, who loved the goodness latent in his own abused nature—angels were whispering to him, "Make this young couple supremely happy—give *him* only the common right to himself, into which every creature is justly born—and then rejoice in *their* exceeding great joy!"

And never had the face of Oswald Waring looked so bright, benignant, and happy, as when he for a moment entertained this thought.

"But, pshaw!" he said to himself, directly. "Am I

Digitized by Google

Don Quixote the younger, that I should be guilty of such a piece of extravagant generosity? Absurd! I really must begin to learn moderation at some time of my life. St. Paul says, 'Let your *moderation* be known unto all men.'"

Now, what on earth can the angels reply, when the other party quotes Scripture against them? Nothing, of course; and Oswald Waring had no more generous impulses that evening. But oh! if he had only listened to those angel whispers; if he had only realized poor little Fannie's romance; if he had only, for once in his life, yielded to his impulse to commit that mad, rash, extravagant piece of Quixotism, as he called the act which, for a moment, he had dreamed of performing—from what impending anguish, what temptations, crime, and remorse, would they not have been redeemed!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

A CLOUDED HONEYMOON.

Judge not; the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar brought from some well-fought field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

It had been arranged, as the best plan for all parties, under present circumstances, that Fanny should retain her situation as shop-woman at Leroux's hair-dressing and fancy store, where they were anxious to keep her as long possible.

With Valentine's hundred dollars, and fifty dollars that had been made in overwork by Phædra, a room was taken in M——, and neatly furnished.

And there Valentine and Fannie went to housekeeping, after this fashion: Fannie, still tending Leroux's shop all day, ate and slept at home, where Valentine visited her once a week, or oftener, whenever he could do so.

In the mean time, as winter advanced, Mr. Waring's health was fully re-established; and, as many of his favorite boon companions, who had been absent on their summer tours, returned to the neighborhood, Oswald began to resume his former habits of extravagant and reckless dissipation. Deer-hunting, coursing, partridge-shooting, and other field sports, occupied the mornings; and dinner-parties, oyster-suppers, and other entertainments, accompanied and followed by wine-drinking, song-singing, card-playing, and similar orgies, at home or abroad, filled up the afternoons and evenings.

Again were Valentine's services brought into requisition

Digitized by Google

three or four nights of every week, to drive his master to the city at *dusk*, and home again at *dawn*. Upon these occasions, Valentine would drive Mr. Waring first to the club-house, restaurant, or billiard-saloon, that happened to be his destination for the evening, set him down, take the carriage and horses to the livery-stable, leave them, and then go to Leroux's, and stay with Fannie until the hour of closing the store arrived, when he would take her home.

Valentine, from his "gentlemanly" appearance, dress, and *ad*dress, as well as from his perfectly trustworthy character, was not an unwelcome visitor at the store, where, behind, the counter, and by the side of Fannie, he made himself so useful, that Monsieur Leroux would often speculate as to the possibility of getting him for an assistant. This also was Valentine's and Fannie's great ambition; but it was a vain one, for his personal attendance was considered indispensable to his master's comfort.

Valentine's standing order, upon these occasions of their night visits to the town, was to be in waiting with the carriage for Mr. Waring at twelve o'clock. And the man was obliged to be punctual, though he had often to wait two or three hours for the coming of the master. And, as a general fact, the longer Mr. Waring remained among his boon companions, the more intoxicated he became; and when at last he appeared, all the old humiliations and provocations of Valentine's former days were renewed. You know what these were. It would be vain repetition to describe them again.

All this was, in every respect, very trying to the poor boy. He religiously adhered to his resolution of abstinence from all spirituous liquors, and constantly and prayerfully struggled against the ebullitions of his own impetuous temper. But the life he led acted nearly fatally upon a very fragile organization; and *all* individuals of antagonistically mixed races are known to be frail. The continued loss of

Digitized by Google

rest, habitual irregularity in food and sleep, affectionate anxiety upon account of his master, tender solicitude for his own gentle, little wife, frequent and excessive provocation from Oswald, all combined to wear and fret his originally excitable temperament to a state of unnatural nervous irritability, that could scarcely sustain with calmness the rudeness of the shocks to which, in his false position, he was constantly exposed; and therefore he was very frequently—to use his own expression at the "love feasts"—in great danger of falling from grace.

Reflecting upon this portion of the poor, doomed boy's life; recollecting the great, the almost superhuman struggle his spirit was making against the terrible, combined powers of evil; of his discordant organization; his fiery impulsive temperament; his unfortunate education; his unhappy position, and his exasperating surroundings, all antagonistic, false, and fateful—we find his parallel nowhere in modern times, and are forced to think of the age of antiquity, and of those mighty but ineffectual struggles of some foredoomed mortal, like Œdipus, in the power of the angry Fates.

Upon poor Valentine's silent, deadly struggle, none but the pitying eye of our Father looked. And nothing but a miracle could have averted its final and fatal issue; and miracles are not wrought at the expense of moral free agency. There came at last a day—an awful day—when the boy spoke, and others heard, of that fell struggle with the powers of darkness.

But we anticipate. The dark and trying seasons were relieved by brighter ones, alternating like night and day.

The hours spent with Fannie, either in the gay, lighted shop, among a thousand objects of taste and beauty, and occupations shared with her, and congenial to his own æsthetic fancy, or in their little home, that despite of poverty Fannie's taste had made beautiful, were seasons of unclouded happiness, in which all care was forgotten

Digitized by Google

There were sunny hours, also, when Mr. Waring's better nature was in the ascendant; when he would feel like gratifying his own benevolence, and making Valentine happy, by fair promises of making him free; of setting him and Fannie up in the hair-dressing and fancy business, which he would laughingly declare to be exactly suited to Valentine; that Val. could be the barber, and Fan. the ladies' hair-dresser; and that they could have a nice little house in an eligible street, with the dwelling above, and the shop below. Thus he would talk, indulging his good humor at the small expense of his breath, and amusing himself with noticing the effect of his words upon Valentine's sensitive nature, playing upon its chords of hope and fear, as if his heart had been a harp, and his *own* the experimenting hand that tried its strings. Perhaps he intended to realize, at some future day, these expectations that he raised; at least, at the time of speaking, he wished to please the boy by infusing a hope; but, alas! he only disturbed him, by exciting and aggravating his old passionate aspiration after liberty.

But, besides those happiest hours spent with Fannie, there were other seasons of forgetfulness, and of almost unalloyed bliss. These were the Sabbath services and the weekly meetings, where the ardent, zealous soul of the young man found its expression in eloquence that reached the hearts of all who heard him, either in exhortation or in prayer.

He was very much beloved by the brethren, and especially by the sisters, of the Magnolia Grove Mission.

There was, however, two or three among the class-leaders who objected to Valentine, as being too much given to the vanities of this world, and who found great stumbling blocks in Valley's shining, black ringlets, and neat and even elegant dress. But as the fiend really did contrive to find his way into sinless Eden, so jealousy might possibly have crept into a "love feast" among Christian brethren and sisters; and Valentine's beauty, grace, eloquence, and con-

Digitized by Google

sequent pre-eminence, among the men, and popularity with the women, might have been the true ground of offense to his less-gifted brothers.

However that might be, Valentine, perceiving only the ostensible matter of complaint, half resolved to give up his taste in dress, and sacrifice his cherished ringlets, and seriously consulted Fannie upon the subject.

But Fannie would not listen to such a proposition with a moment's favor, and said that brother Portiphar and some of the others had such a grudge against beauty, that they would turn all the Lord's fair roses and lilies into lobelia and rue, if they could. And Fannie's single opinion and vote outweighed all the others, and Valentine's hyperion curls continued to be an offense in Israel.

Thus passed the winter and spring. This first half-year, with all its shadows, was yet the fairest portion of the young pair's married life. Toward its close, clouds began to gather darkly and threateningly over their heads.

In the early part of summer, Fannie was necessitated to give up her situation at Leroux's, and confine herself to such work as she could perform in the privacy of her own room, such as fine sewing and fancy work, which was not very lucrative; but even this resource in the course of a few weeks had to be abandoned, for Fannie was unusually delicate, and sadly needed rest, and some one to take care of her for a while. And just about this time, late in July, Mr. Waring made up his mind to go to the North, and spend the remainder of the summer in a tour among the fashionable watering-places. Of course, he designed to take his servant with him. In vain Valentine, hoping in the proverbial "good nature" of his master, proffered his earnest request to be left behind, urging the state of Fannie's health as the reason.

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense!" Mr. Waring could not spare the servant that was used to his ways. Fannie must do

Digitized by Google

without her husband, and take her chance, as all those of her class had to do. Surely she must have known what she had to expect when she married a slave man.

"And now, Valentine, don't bore me any longer with the subject. You were a great fool to get married at all; and if you trouble me further, you will make me regret ever having given my consent to that foolish measure," concluded Mr. Waring.

Valentine controlled his own rebellious emotions, and leaving Fannie as comfortable as under the circumstances he could make her, accompanied his master to the North.

They visited first the Virginia Springs, then Niagara, Saratoga, Nahant, and returning at the end of three months, reached home.

In close attendance upon his master, Valentine was obliged to pass through M—— without stopping to see his wife.

But the next day, at his first disengaged hour, he set out for the city, where he found Fannie, the mother of a little girl of six weeks of age, and reinstated in her former position at Leroux's.

Fannie was very happy, and gave a cheering account of all that had occurred. Everybody had been very kind to her; the sisters of the church had visited her often; Phædra had been with her, and Madame Leroux had made her many presents.

All this relieved and delighted the youthful husband and father; and when he pressed his infant daughter to his bosom, he wept tears of joy at the thought that her mother's heritage of freedom would be hers.

Some peaceful days followed this, in which Valentine, oblivious of every cause of disquietude, enjoyed the perfection of domestic happiness.

Then, early in November, Mr. Waring determined to go to New Orleans, to prosecute his acquaintance with a young

Digitized by Google

widow, a native and resident of that city, whom he had met at Saratoga, and with whom he had been very much pleased. His servant was of course required to attend him, and upon this occasion Valentine obeyed, without a single demur.

On reaching New Orleans, Mr. Waring took rooms at the St. Charles Hotel. Apparently his suit prospered, for their stay in that city was prolonged through November and December. And Valentine had no opportunity of visiting his girlish wife until after the new year.

Then Mr. Waring hastily, and in the highest spirits, returned home, to settle up certain necessary business with his lawyer, appertaining to troublesome creditors, and give some commendable directions to his housekeeper, touching the rearrangement of his disorderly bachelor's hall. This occupied two or three weeks, during which time Valentine, when not in close attendance upon Mr. Waring, found opportunities to visit his beloved Fannie, and caress the infant, of whom he was dotingly fond.

The first of February, Mr. Waring went again to New Orleans, to meet his engagement with Madame Moriere, his promised bride.

Their marriage was arranged to take place immediately, to save the delay of the seven weeks of Lent, just at hand, and during which no strict Catholic, such as Madame professed to be, would dare to enter into the "holy state" of matrimony.

Immediately after the ceremony, the newly-married couple set out on a bridal tour.

Mr. Waring was attended by his favorite servant, and Madame by her maid, a French grisette, who "made eyes" at Valentine, and otherwise harassed him with her coquetries, during the whole journey. And this conduct of Finette first suggested to Valentine's mind the probability that, during his own enforced, long, and frequent absences from home, some one as unprincipled as Finette might be

Digitized by Google

making love to his own pretty Fannie, unprotected and exposed as she was in that French hair-dressing establishment. Valentine might have been sure of that; but Fannie, with her wise and affectionate consideration for him, had never troubled the transient happiness of his sojourn with her, by any histories of the petty vexations that disturbed her own life during his absence. Besides, Fannie, with all her innocence, was city bred, full of experience and the wisdom it gives, and quite capable of taking care of herself. And Valentine never would have dreamed of the possibility of such annoyances for her, had not the behavior of Mademoiselle Finette made the suggestion. And now the thought gave his excitable heart a great deal of disturbance, and made him very anxious to return home. Of course, Valentine's impatience did not expedite that desired event.

The bridal party were absent six weeks, and finally reached home about the middle of April—a most enchanting season in that climate, corresponding in its advanced state of vegetation with our June, but much more beautiful in the luxuriance and variety of its trees, shrubs, vines, fruits and flowers, than any season in our latitude. The Red Hill mansion was very lovely in its grove of magnolias. The internal arrangement of the house reflected great credit upon Phædra; and Madame condescended to express much satisfaction with her new home and her good housekeeper.

As upon all former occasions, Valentine had been in too much requisition, when they passed through M——, on their way home, to stop and see Fannie; but the next morning Mr. Waring dispatched him to the city, to attend to the careful packing and sending out some baggage that had been left, of necessity, the evening before, at the hotel.

And Valentine availed of that opportunity to visit his small family.

Digitized by Google

He found Fannie as pretty and as glad to see him as always, and his little darling Coralie, now seven months old, more beautiful and attractive than ever; but he could not linger with them long; his duties to his master obliged him, in less than an hour, to tear himself away again, and hasten with Madame's trunks and boxes to Red Hill.

The necessity of leaving his treasures so soon again, after so long an absence, depressed Valentine so much, that Fannie hastened to console and cheer him. He was not, after all, more unfortunate in that respect, she said, than sailors and soldiers were, nor was she more to be pitied than their wives.

And she sent him off, comforted with the promise that she would get leave from Leroux, and come out the next morning with her baby, to spend the day with Phædra, at Red Hill.

Fannie kept her word, and, during her visit the next day, won her way so well into the good graces of Madame, that that lady expressed a kind interest in her and her little child, made them some pretty presents, and promised to facilitate as much as possible the frequent visits of Valentine to his wife and child. And the lady remembered and performed her promise so well, that unusual indulgence was extended to Valentine, who was by her intercession enabled to pass every night with his family.

Mr. Waring, in his attachment to his bride, seemed for the time quite won from the extravagance and dissipation of his late bachelor life. He remained at home, and addressed himself with commendable zeal to the management of his plantation, to the improvement of his land, his stock, his machinery, and agricultural system in general, and also, after his own blundering fashion, to the amelioration, comfort, and welfare, of his people.

Valentine, no longer distressed *for* or *by* his master, divided his attention between the manifold light duties that

Digitized by Google

occupied him all day at Red Hill, and the evenings spent in assisting Fannie in her business behind the counter of Leroux's shop, and for which he now received a regular payment, in consideration of the fact that he stood at the post and performed the duties of Monsieur Leroux, whose age obliged him to leave the shop at an early hour of the evening, just as the custom was beginning to grow brisk. Thus they were enabled to add many little comforts to their humble home, and also to lay up a trifle against the chance of darker days.

Every alternate Sabbath they attended meeting together at Magnolia Grove, and afterward dined with Phædra at Red Hill, and went home at night; and, on the intervening Sabbath, when there was no service at the Grove Mission, Phædra would come into town, and go to church with the children at the Bethel (colored) Mission of M——, and afterward take dinner with them, before returning home in the evening.

Thus passed the halcyon days of spring, preceding the awful moral storm which ended in that "household wreck."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

PROPHETIC.

The look, the air that frets thy sight,
May be a token that below,
The soul has closed in deadly fight
With some internal fiery foe,
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee, shuddering, on thy face.

SPRING in the South is a season of the most enchanting beauty. Forests of odoriferous, blossoming trees, thickets of sweet-scented shrubs, and fields of fragrant wild flowers, fill the atmosphere with their delicious perfume; climbing vines twine around the trees, and overgrow the fences, transforming them into arbors and to hedges of flowering plants of matchless bloom and fragrance; while myriads of bright-winged birds enliven all the sunny air with their glad melody. It is a season and a scene no lover of nature could look upon without rapture.

But the summer, with its advanced luxuriance of beauty, too often brings malaria, pestilence, and death.

The promise of the spring to one in Valentine's condition had been too fair to last for any length of time. Clouds began to gather over his head. First, as Mr. Waring went no longer to town to spend his evenings, it followed as a matter of course that he frequently required Valentine's services at that hour at home. On inquiring for his servant upon these occasions, and receiving the answer that Valentine had gone to town to see his wife, he would grow angry, and exclaim, with an oath—

"I have never had any good of that boy since his foolish

Digitized by Google

marriage. In town every night! This thing is getting to be insufferable, and shall be stopped."

And one morning, when Valentine returned, Mr. Waring told him that he was not to take himself off to see his wife every evening; but that in future he must ask permission to do so.

Now, anger was Valentine's easily-besetting sin, the one dangerous internal foe he had constantly to combat. Now, indignation rose and swelled in his bosom. And not from fear or from policy, but from Christian principle, he strove to quell its ragings. He answered only with a bow, and left the room for that silent, solitary struggle with himself that no eye but the Father's ever witnessed. He obeyed the mandate; it was galling, but he obeyed it; and each evening presented himself to his master with something like this style of request, which, as a compromise between asking a permission and intimating a purpose, was not so difficult to make —

"I have got through all my business here for to-day, sir, and am ready to go to town if you don't want me."

"Very well; take yourself off; only be sure to come back early in the morning, to be ready when I rise," would be the frequent answer. "The proud rascal! I believe he would almost as lief die as ask leave to do any thing; but it is my own fault; I have treated that boy like a brother, until he is so spoiled as to be quite above his condition," Mr. Waring would add, half jesting, half in earnest.

But sometimes, when Valentine asked, leave would not be granted him; and this occasioned an irregularity in his nightly attendance at the shop, that finally obliged Monsieur Leroux to say to him —

"Valentine, my man, unless you can attend better, I shall have to have to discharge you altogether, and get a full clerk, which would be better any way, as he could be here all the time."

Digitized by Google

Full of trouble at this prospect, Valentine the next day mentioned this to his master, who, happening to be in an ill humor, answered—

"What the fiend is all that to me, sir? Old Leroux is liable to prosecution for hiring your services at all, without a permit."

"But it was in over-hours—in my own time," remonstrated Valentine.

"Your own time! Pray, sir, what time is *that?* I have yet to learn that you *have* any time of your own!"

Valentine suppressed his indignation, but that was as much as he could do. He dared not trust himself to reply.

"Leave the room! The sight of you irritates me. And be very thankful that I do not prosecute your friend, old Leroux, with his mulatto clerks and shop girls! These beasts of Frenchmen have not the slightest idea of the distinctions of race."

Silently, Valentine left the room, to retire, and have another wrestle with his pride and anger.

That evening he was not permitted to go to see Fannie; and, from that time, the permission to visit her was less and still less frequently granted.

Finally, old Leroux, who had long delayed the step for poor Fannie's sake, hired a clerk, and Valentine lost his over-hour situation, and with it many fair though humble hopes and prospects. He was much depressed; but Fannie bade him do right, trust in God, and cheer up; and said that she would probably get her own salary raised, and that they would get on very well.

Now, whether his marriage had changed his feelings toward Valentine, or whether it was Valentine's marriage that in time and effect grew displeasing to him, or whether both these causes combined to produce an estrangement between the master and the man, I know not; but certainly their mutual relations were changing for the worse. The

Digitized by Google

master grew less considerate and indulgent, and more arrogant and exacting toward his poor servant; and that servant had a daily struggle with his own indignant sense of outraged manhood. Still, Fannie soothed him.

"Govern your temper, dear Valley, and God will bless you. Never mind me and Coralie, we shall get along well enough; and we can see each other Sunday at church, and Thursday at prayer-meeting, anyhow," she would say, cheerfully.

True, Fannie had her baby always with her, and that was a great comfort to the youthful wife and mother for the absence of her husband. They might have looked for some aid from the intercession of Mrs. Waring; but alas! for fair and false hopes, her romantic interest in little Fannie that had been but a frail spring blossom of her own happy bridehood, soon withered; and, added to that, her influence with her husband had waned with her honeymoon. So, between her indifference and her inability, together with her ignorance of the facts—for Valentine seldom had sight or speech alone with his mistress, or, when he had, was too proud and reserved to complain; and Fannie, from native modesty, would rather endure than plead—little aid was to be expected from Mrs. Waring's interference in behalf of the young couple.

The gathering clouds of fate darkened and deepened over the head of the doomed boy. His little home in the city was visited with sickness.

First, his little Coralie was taken ill. No father in this world, whatever his nature or degree might be, ever loved his infant with a more passionate attachment than poor Valentine felt toward his little Coralie; she was the darling of his heart and eyes, the light and joy of his present, and the hope of his future. It was for her own sake that he wished to save money—to educate her. Daily he thanked God that she was born free.

Digitized by Google

Now, his bright beautiful Coralie was pining away under a complication of infant disorders.

A sick and suffering child is one of the most distressing objects in nature, especially when that child is but a babe, and cannot, as the nurses say, "tell where its trouble is," and can only look at you with its pleading eyes, as if imploring the relief you cannot give. You who have ever had an ill and suffering infant, always pining and moaning with its aching head, too heavy for the slender attenuated neck, dropped upon its nurse's or its mother's shoulder, yet still often looking up with a faint little smile to greet you when you come to take it, or piteously holding out its emaciated arms to coax you back when you are called to leave it—you can estimate the distress of the poor young father, living three miles distant from the sick child, that might at any hour grow suddenly worse, and die; and only permitted to visit it occasionally, at the pleasure of others.

Fannie's health, never strong, began to fail; loss of rest night after night, with the sick child, joined to the fatiguing duties of her situation, which she was still obliged to retain as a means of support, exhausted her strength.

The poor infant, bereft all day of both parents, and left in charge of an old free negress that lived near the shop, had the sad, unnatural grief of home sickness added to its other suffering, and so pined and failed day by day.

This state of things lasted for some weeks.

After a night of suffering to the child and sleeplessness to herself, Fannie would rise in the morning, and, though nearly blind, giddy, and fainting from habitual loss of rest, she would set her room in order, eat a morsel of breakfast, bathe and dress the little one, collect all the articles it would need, and prepare its food and medicine for the day; and, lastly, dress herself with neatness and taste, for it was very necessary that the shop girl should look as well as possible; take her sick babe in one arm, and its basket of necessaries

Digitized by Google

in the other, lock her door, and set out for the shop, stopping on her way to leave the child and its basket at Aunt Peggy's hut, where there was no cradle or rocking-chair, but, what was perhaps as well, a pallet laid in the coolest part of the room.

Here Fannie would sit and rest a moment, while she nursed her child, and then she would lay it down upon the pallet and leave it, thankful if the little creature happened to be sleeping peacefully, wretched if it chanced to be wakeful and to be wailing after its mother.

One morning, when Fannie had lingered beyond her hour for going to the store, trying to put to sleep or to pacify the suffering child, she finally laid it down upon the pallet, and, with many kisses and soothing words and promises to come back soon, tore herself away; but, just as she reached the door, the little one struggled upon its feeble limbs, staggered toward her, and fell, with its weak hand clasping her skirts.

Fannie burst into tears, took the babe up in her arms, sat down upon a chair, and, pressing the little sufferer to her bosom, caressed and soothed it, and promised never to leave it again; and, speaking to the old woman, said—

"Please go over to Leroux's, Aunt Peggy, and tell Monsieur that I can't come to-day, on account of poor little Coralie; and I don't know when I can come—so he may, if he chooses, look out for somebody else to fill my place."

The prudent old woman expostulated, asked Fannie what she would do for a living if she gave up her situation at Leroux's, and advised her to hold fast, saying that the child might die, and then there! she couldn't get the place again so easy as she had lost it.

But Fannie was firm. Pressing the infant closer to her bosom, she replied: Yes; that little Coralie might die, and then the thought of how often she had left the poor baby grieving for her mother, would break her heart; that it was

Digitized by Google

no use for any one to talk; come what might, she never would leave the sick child again.

Aunt Peggy carried the message, and brought back the reply that Madame Leroux had always expected this trouble to come upon Fannie; that she had always *said* so; and that Fannie would find her words true, that *this* was only the beginning of the troubles she would meet, for having been so lost to her own interest as to marry a handsome slave man, whose very hands were not his own, to help her.

Fannie said that she would trust in God, unto death and beyond death; for that often she thought the best way in which He could right his children's wrongs, and comfort their afflictions, was by taking them from this sad world to his own heaven.

Truly, the poor young creature needed all this faith, to enable her to bear the troubles that were, and those that were to come. She carried little Coralie back to her own poor room. She sought out what plain sewing and clear starching she could get to do in her own home; but this was very little, now that so many of the ladies and gentlemen among whom she hoped to get employment had left the city for the Northern watering-places. It brought her a very scanty income; and as, out of this, room rent, fuel, light, food, clothing, medicine, and other incidental expenses, had to be paid, and as, besides, she would not suffer little Coralie to want any comfort, or even any luxury, that she could procure for her by her own exertions and self-denial, it followed, of course, that she herself went without a sufficiency of the real necessaries of life; and so, privation being added to her other ills, accelerated the decline of her health.

Valentine could only come to see them once a week. He would come Sunday morning, spend the day in nursing his darling, tear himself from her clinging, baby arms, and return, almost broken-hearted, at night.

Digitized by Google

This was the condition of things when the yellow fever made its appearance at M——. This was nothing new—the pestilence was no stranger, it was an annual visitor at M——.

But this summer the fever appeared in its most terrible aspect, with all the malign, virulent, and fatal characteristics of the plague.

I am not about to harrow your feelings or my own with any minute details of the misery that ensued as the pestilence advanced; of the physical agony, from pain, fever, thirst and famine; of the wretchedness, from bereavement, poverty, and desertion; of the mental anguish, from terror, grief, horror and despair. The pestilence brings in its dread train almost every form of physical and moral evil; at the same time, providentially, it calls forth, to combat these, the most exalted virtues in the human character. You have only to call to mind the ravages of the yellow fever during the past summer and autumn at Norfolk and Portsmouth, to estimate the horrors of the pestilence at M——. The people by hundreds, fled the city: those that remained, by thousands died.

The population, reduced to less than one-half, consisted chiefly of the poorer classes, who could not get away, and of those heroic souls whom a high sense of Christian duty or simple humanity had retained in or brought to the scene of misery.

A dense, copper-colored cloud hung low, like a pall, over the plague-stricken city; its air was considered deadly to the new comer that breathed it.

All intercourse between M—— and the surrounding plantations was interdicted. The greatest anxiety was felt by the planters, lest the fever should break out in their families, or, where it would be more likely to make its first appearance, among the slaves; the greatest precautions were taken to avert such a dread misfortune. The masters

Digitized by Google

and their families confined themselves strictly to their own domains, and the slaves were positively forbidden to ap-approach the city, or even the highways leading thitherward. As many of the neighboring negroes had friends or relatives living in the city, and as their affections are known to be rather obstinate and daring, to insure safety, a voluntary police was organized by the planters, whose duty it was, in turn, to guard the highways, and see that no negro passed without a written permit from the master or mistress.

Preventives of disease and disinfecting agents were diligently sought after. Alcohol, in the form of wine, brandy, and whisky, was supposed to be a sovereign safeguard against the pestilence. I do not say that it was laid down as a medical dogma that a habitual inebriate enjoyed impunity from contagion; but I do say, what will probably shock my Temperance readers, that all persons were counselled by their physicians to keep themselves always slightly under the influence of alcohol, so long as the pestilence should last. And most people took the advice, finding, at least, something in the half-stimulating, half-stupefying, effects of liquor, to brave or dull the sense of danger. Wine and brandy were freely used in the planter's family; whisky was freely circulated among the negroes of the plantation. Some among them of the Methodist persuasion and the Temperance Society demurred at breaking their pledge; but even these, when made to understand that the whisky was to be taken as *medicine*, by the advice of a physician, felt their consciences set at rest upon the subject, and never was *doctor's stuff* swallowed with less repugnance than their grog was taken, three times a day.

Valentine held to his principles; he would not break his pledge. In vain for a long time his master, and even his mistress, remonstrated with him.

Circumstances altered cases; times were changed; self-

Digitized by Google

preservation was the first law of nature; in view of the present danger, his pledge was not binding; for if he kept his pledge, he might lose his life," they would argue.

"That was the Lord's affair; all *he* had to do was to keep his pledge; and if he should die, so much the better; life had no charms for him," Valentine would reply.

And in truth the wretched young man was much to be compassionated. His wife and child alone and helpless in the midst of the plague, exposed to the united horrors of pestilence, famine, and solitary death from desertion; himself forbidden to seek them at their utmost need. Thrice had he escaped and sought the city, and as often had he fallen into the hands of the voluntary police; they did not maltreat him, except inasmuch as they would not suffer him to pass without a permit from his master, and this permit could not be obtained. He could think of nothing but his wife and child. Were they living, and suffering unimagined miseries? Were they among the uncounted dead, whose rude coffins lay one upon another, three or four feet deep, not in graves, but in trenches? He did not even know. But all his thoughts by day, and his fitful dreams by night, were haunted with the forms of Fannie and of Coralie. He saw little Coralie in every phase of memory, and hope, and fear. He saw her bright and beautiful, as she had been in the sweet spring-time; he saw her pale and pining, as he had seen her last in her wasting sickness; and he saw her lying dead in her coffin, and woke with a loud cry of anguish. His heart, his spirit, seemed broken.

Seeing his haggard and despairing looks, his mistress expostulated with him, and counselled the use of wine or brandy, saying that the depressing effects of the atmosphere were felt by everybody, even by those living in the country; that it affected all persons with despondency, causing them to look only on the darkest side of all things; and that

Digitized by Google

it was only to be counteracted by the stimulating effects of alcohol.

At last Valentine followed this counsel, and took the prescribed "medicine." Not to prevent contagion did he take it, though that purpose would have exonerated him from the charge of a broken pledge; but to dull the poignant sense of suffering, which was greater than he could bear.

Oh, fatal day that he placed again to his lips the maddening glass! All have seen how dangerous is such a relapse. It is generally a sudden and hopeless fall. It was so in the case of this poor fellow. He took the first glass, and, liking its effects, took a second and a third, before stopping. If he awoke in the morning to remember his troubles, he drank all day to forget them, and fell at night into a heavy sleep. He zealously followed the medical prescription—nay, he quite overdid it, and kept himself *not* "slightly" under the influence of alcohol. And in a short space of time, if his master or his mistress remonstrated with him, it was not for total abstinence from intoxicating spirits, but for the opposite extreme of an habitual intemperance. Such was the state of affairs at Red Hill for a few weeks, during which Valentine had no direct or certain intelligence of Fannie and his little child.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

CAIN.

I pr'ythee take thy fingers from my throat;
For though I am not splenetive and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!

Shakespeare.

ONE morning, near the last of August—yet stay! Such mornings dawn unheralded by any sign to warn us what the fated day shall bring forth ere its close. Such mornings dawn as other mornings do,—the doomed men and women rise as other people do,—as you or I arose this morning, upon the dread day that unpremeditated crime or sudden death shall fix their mortal doom forever.

That morning Mr. Waring arose, feeling rather unwell and irritable, which was no unusual circumstance of late, for he was chafing between two conflicting interests, one of which called him away, while the other bound him at home. He was very anxious, with his wife, to leave the neighborhood of the infected city; but, in the present condition of affairs, he hesitated to trust the plantation and negroes to the care of the overseer.

Valentine arose with the same heavy heart that had marked his waking hours for many days, yet dressed himself and combed his raven black curls with the habitual regard to neatness and beauty that had become a second nature. And it was curious to see how this habit of neatness and elegance lasted through all the darkest hours of his life.

Phædra got up, and attended to the arrangement of the

Digitized by Google

house and the preparation of breakfast with her usual exactness.

Mrs. Waring, suffering from the debilitating effects of the weather, indulged herself in the morning, and breakfasted in bed.

No foreboding was felt by any one; no token in sky or air, or circumstances without, or presentiment within their hearts, warned them of calamity, crime, and sudden death, at hand. That morning, after breakfast, Valentine strolled listlessly out toward the public road leading to the town. It was his daily habit. It had been commenced in the hope of meeting some one from the city who might be able to give him news of Fannie and her little child. And though he never met with success, he still rambled thither every day, as well from force of habit as from the faint hope that he might yet hear of them. He strolled to the highway, met his usual ill success, and, after lingering an hour or two, sauntered dejectedly toward home.

When he reached a lane that separated his master's plantation on the right hand from Mr. Hewitt's on the left, his attention was arrested by the sound of a low voice. He listened.

"Hish-sh! Walley, come here, here to the gap."

The voice proceeded from behind the hedge, formed by a thick growth of Spanish daggers, that completely covered the fence on the left of the lane. There was a small broken place in it, toward which Valentine sauntered indifferently. He saw on the other side the huge head of a gigantic negro, a jet-black, lumbering, awkward, good-natured monster enough, who belonged to Mr. Hewitt, and who sported the imposing cognomen of "Governor."

"Well, Governor, is that you? What do you want with me?"

"Hish-sh, Walley, don't talk so loud! our oberseer aint fur off. Brudder 'Lisha, he bin out from town."

Digitized by Google

"Well!" exclaimed Valentine, with breathless interest, bending forward.

"W'en you hear from Fannie las'?"

"Not for two weeks. Why do you ask? Have *you* heard from her? Speak! oh, for Heaven's sake, speak!" exclaimed Valentine, breathlessly.

"Fannie done got de feber."

"Oh God!"

"Brudder 'Lisha, he done bin 'ere dis mornin' and tell we-dem."

"Oh Heaven! oh, when was she taken? Who is with her? Is she"——

"Dunno nuffin 'tall 'bout it, 'cept 'tis she's got de feber. Brudder 'Lisha, he done bin dere to her place, an' heern it."

"Where is Elisha?"

"Done gone right traight back to town."

"And that is all the satisfaction you can give me," cried Valentine, beside himself with distress.

"Yaw, yaw! I trought how I'd watch arter you, and tell you—'long as you'd like to hear it. Hish-sh-sh! Walley, stoop down here close, till I whisper to you."

"What now!" exclaimed Valentine, in new alarm, bending his ear to the huge negro's lips.

"Hish-sh-sh! Walley, *I wish how it wur my 'ooman as had de yaller feber!*"

"Wretch!"

"An wish we-dem's white nigger oberseer had it too!"

"What do you mean?"

"And I wish dey bofe might *die* long of it."

"Wretch! I say again!"

"Trufe, brudder! dat's me jes'! I'se de wretch! an' I wish how dis same wretch might hab de feber long o' de oder two, an' how I might die long of 'em, and how we might all go up to Marster's trone, and have de case 'cided whose wife dis 'ooman is for to be."

Digitized by Google

"Governor! what, do you mean to say that the new overseer is tampering with your wife's fidelity to you?"

"Hish-sh! he aint fur off. Dunno what de debbil you mean wid your big words. But she lub *fine dress*, an' *he* gib it to her; she berry *putty*, mos' *white*, you know, an' *he* sen' me way off to de furres' fiel to work."

"Why don't you talk to her?"

"'Taint no use, she 'ny eberyting."

"Why don't you speak to your master?"

"'Taint no use; he won't nebber hear no 'plaints gin de oberseer."

"I am very sorry for you, poor fellow! and I would like to give you comfort and counsel, but I must hurry away from you, and try to get leave to go to town, and see poor dear Fannie. If I were you, Governor, I *would* speak to Major Hewitt upon this subject. He never would permit such a wrong done you."

"'Taint no use, I tell yer! But nebber min', Walley, listen yer! some ob dese yer days *I fixes him!*"

Valentine started at the demoniac look that, in a man usually so mild, accompanied these vague words; and, bidding the negro a hasty good morning, he ran along the lane until he reached the house.

His own heart and brain were wild with grief and alarm, as he hastened to the presence of his master, whom he did not doubt would now, in this extremity, permit him to go to the city.

Mr. Waring, in an irritable frame of mind, was walking up and down the front piazza, as Valentine stepped upon the floor.

"Well, what now?" he exclaimed, testily, at the sight of the young man's agitated countenance.

"My wife, sir! she has got the fever."

"Sorry to hear it, but—how did *you* hear it, sir? I hope no one from that place has had the temerity to set foot upon these premises, in face of the prohibition?"

Digitized by Google

"No, sir; I happened to meet with Governor, Major Hewitt's man, and he had seen an acquaintance of ours from the city, who came from Fannie's house this morning, and brought the news."

"I wonder Major Hewitt does not take better care of his own interests than to permit stragglers from the city to infest his place. He will bring the pestilence among us before we know where we are," said Mr. Waring, angrily.

"But, Fannie, sir, my poor wife"——

"Well, what of her? I am sorry, of course, really sorry, Valentine. It is a pity you ever got married; if you had not, neither you nor Fannie would have had so much trouble. It was a very foolish piece of business!"

"Perhaps it was, sir; but people who love each other have a sort of propensity to get married. It can't be helped, I suppose; it's a way they've got."

"And a bad way—very bad way—that I ought never to have sanctioned."

"Nor *imitated*, sir!"

"You are an impertinent fellow! But I overlook that. There is some difference, I should judge, between you and me, and I certainly ought never to have consented to your taking that girl."

"It is too late to say that now, sir!" said Valentine, with a sigh so heavy that Mr. Waring inquired, quickly—

"So you repent it, do you?"

"No, God Almighty knows I do not!" replied Valentine, with sorrowful earnestness; adding, "but, oh sir, I am losing precious time. I came here to ask you for a permit to go to town and see my wife."

"A permit! A permit to go to town, and to visit a woman ill with the very pestilence we are all doing our best to guard against? A permit to go there, and take the fever just as sure as you go, and bring back and spread the contagion among hundreds, whom we are all doing our best to

Digitized by Google

guard from the pestilence! Impossible, Valentine! I wonder you could be so unreasonable as to ask it!"

"Unreasonable that I should want to go and see my suffering wife?"

"Yes—under circumstances. Yes, I am sorry for her, Valentine, and sorry for *you*, though I cannot say that your manner is very respectful. Still, I *am* very sorry for you; and if it were possible for me to do any thing for your relief, I would do it—as it is, I regret that I can do nothing."

"Oh, sir! Master Oswald you could let me go to town," pleaded Valentine.

"At the imminent hazard of your own life, and the all but certainty of bringing the pestilence upon this plantation."

"All do not get the fever who are exposed to its influence; neither do they always spread contagion into the healthy places they chance to visit," reasoned the young man.

"The risk is too great," replied the master, curtly.

"Would you think it too great if your *own* wife were the one concerned, sir?" argued Valentine.

"Be more respectful, sirrah! There is some difference, I should say!" retorted the master, angrily.

"Yes, there is a difference!" cried Valentine; "and when I see any thing to respect"—— suddenly he stopped, swift as lightning came the thought, that if he refrained from provoking his master now, and came to him an hour hence, when he should be in a better humor, the prayer that he now denied, he might then grant. Controlling his rising indignation, he bowed, turned abruptly, and went off.

"Impudent rascal! he was just about to say something that I should have had to knock him down for; and then he thought better of it, and stopped—it's well he did! Poor fellow, I am sorry for him, too; but it is all his own fault! If he were not so presumptuous, he would not feel

Digitized by Google

so badly. That is the very deuce of it; for that prevents him from seeing that there is a difference." Such were the reflections of Mr. Waring, as he continued to pace up and down the front piazza.

Valentine had mastered his anger, but he could not control the terrible anxiety that preyed upon his heart; Fannie suffering, Fannie dying deserted, alone; little Coralie perishing from neglect—these were the torturing visions that maddened his brain.

He went and told Phædra, who wept bitterly at the sad story; but yet sought to comfort her son, and inspire hope, by promising to go herself and tell Mrs. Waring, and get her to intercede with her husband for Valentine.

This was done, but with little success; for, though Mrs. Waring was moved to compassion, and went to her husband, and besought him to take compassion upon Valentine, and send him to see his sick wife, and trust in Providence to avert all evil consequences, Mr. Waring was not only firm in his refusal, but also exhibited no small degree of impatience at her interference. Unwilling to inflict a hopeless disappointment upon the poor fellow, Mrs. Waring tempered the report of her ill success, by saying that, though Mr. Waring had now refused her petition, she still hoped that he would think better of it, and grant the permit.

Yet all this time Fannie might be dying, and her child perishing for want—every moment was precious beyond price!

Phædra sought her master's presence, and pleaded with him—pleaded by her long years of faithful service; by her devoted care of him in his feeble infancy; by the days of his childhood, when he and Valentine were playmates; by all the long years, as boys and as men, those two had passed together, inseparable companions, until the marriage of each; by her own devoted attachment to them; by his

Digitized by Google

love for his own wife; by every sweet affection and holy thought, to have compassion on her son, his own foster-brother, and let him go and minister to his sick—probably his dying wife. Phædra pleaded with more eloquence, but with not more success, than the others.

Some substances melt under the action of water—others, in the same element turn to stone. Instead of melting, Mr. Waring's obduracy seemed to ossify under the effects of tears and entreaties. He told Phædra, firmly, that he did not mean to gratify one man, at the hazard of exposing many to contagion. And at the dinner-table, speaking partly in justification of his own line of conduct, and partly in apology for the manner in which he had met Mrs. Waring's intercession of the morning, he said—

"You emphasize this matter too much, Madame; this Fannie is, after all, but one sufferer among thousands; you also mistake in endowing these creatures with the same acuteness of feelings that we possess; there is a difference, Madame! there is a difference! I wish I could make people understand that there is a difference; neither Valentine nor Phædra seem to have the slightest conception of this difference."

"I must confess that in that respect I share their obtusity," remarked Madame, while Mr. Waring, in apparent self-satisfaction, went on with his dinner.

But was he really satisfied with himself? Who shall answer?

Meantime, Valentine wandered about, consumed with sorrow and anxiety. Doubtless, he would have run away, and endeavored to reach the town; but he knew how carefully the avenues thither were guarded, and how desperate was the attempt that he had already thrice before made to elude the police. It would involve a loss of several hours to make the attempt, which, if it should fail, as it was altogether likely to do, would entirely preclude him from all

Digitized by Google

possible chance of seeing Fannie; therefore he thought best to make another appeal to his master, before taking the last desperate step. He knew by experience that the hour after dinner always found Oswald Waring in his best humor.

It was then that he sought him.

He found him—not, as before, walking in the front piazza, where the afternoon sun was now shining, but reclining on a settee on the back piazza, that was now in the shade. He lay languidly fanning himself with one hand, while he held a pamphlet that he was reading in the other. Valentine had resolved not to provoke him by any hasty words, as he had used in the morning. He resolved to govern his own spirit, to approach his master respectfully, humbly. He did so.

"Master Oswald!"

Mr. Waring looked up, seemed annoyed, and hastened to exclaim—

"Now, Valentine, if you have come again about going to see your sick wife, and all that humbug, I tell you it is no manner of use. I have been wearied nearly to death already with fruitless importunity, and I want to hear no more of it."

"Oh, sir!"

"I tell you it is of no use to talk to me!"

"Ah, but Master Oswald, only listen, even if you do no more!" pleaded Valentine, in the fond hope of an ardent nature, that, judging from the earnestness of his feelings, believes that if he gains a *hearing*, he gains his *cause*.

"Well, well! but I warn you it will be wasted breath."

"Ah, sir, do not say so! I am nearly crazy with trouble, sir, when I think of Fannie and poor little Coralie. She was very poor, sir, and the child was very sick, even before the pestilence appeared. Now she has the fever in that horrible place, with no one to help her or to take care of the poor child. She may be dying, sir, even while I speak!

Digitized by Google

she may be dying, as many of the poor in that doomed city die, deserted—alone—but for the famishing infant, whose cries add to her own sufferings; she may have, as many of the poor have, famine and burning thirst added to her fever, with no one near to place to her lips a morsel of food or a drop of water! Think of it, sir! My God! do you wonder that I am almost frantic?" cried the young man, earnestly, beseechingly clasping his hands.

"An imaginary picture altogether, Valentine," coolly remarked Mr. Waring.

"A common reality among the poor of the city, this dreadful season, sir. You know it. You have heard it and read it. And she is *very* poor, sir. She and the child often suffered, even before the pestilence came and stopped *her* work with all the rest. Judge what her condition must be now. Oh, my God!" cried the young man, in a voice of agony.

"Your fears exaggerate the case, Valentine. There are alms-houses and hospitals, and sisters of charity and relief funds, and all those sort of contrivances for the very poor."

"Yet you know, for I heard you read it, that all these places are full, that the relief fund failed to meet all the demands made upon it; and you know, besides, that all the poor white people have to be taken care of, before the colored people are thought of."

"Of course, there is a difference, you know. I wish, once for all, you would understand that fact," said Mr. Waring, replying only to the latter proposition. Then he added, "your fears magnify the danger; the yellow fever cannot last forever, and she may get well."

"Not one in ten do—I heard you say it."

"Well, she may be that one."

"What, sir, with all the privations of her lot."

"Yes, why not? You are out of sorts, Valentine. Go

Digitized by Google

into the house and take a drink; it will set you up—in the dining-room—sideboard—left-hand corner—some fine old Otard brandy—help yourself; it will make a man of you."

"Thank you, Master Oswald; but that is not what I came for."

"What the devil *did* you come for, then, you troublesome fellow; tell me, and let me go to sleep," exclaimed the master, impatiently turning on his settee.

"I came to beg and to pray you, Master Oswald, for a permit to go to town."

"And you cannot have it, Valentine; so you may save your prayers. Once for all, if you and your mother, and Madame, your mistress, to back you, were to pray from now till doomsday, you—*cannot—have—it.* Do you understand?" said the master, stolidly.

Valentine governed his own rising anger; it was as much as he could possibly do; he could not suppress his grief, but broke forth in a voice of agony—

"Oh! Fannie, Fannie, Fannie, and her little child!"

"D——n it, sir, stop your howling, or go somewhere else to howl. What the devil is Fannie or her brat to me? If they are suffering, it is her own fault; she had no business to marry a slave, whom she could never expect to help her. And if their sufferings afflict you, it serves you right; it is a just punishment for your cursed folly in marrying a free woman, with no master to look after her or her children."

"I will be silent! I will be silent!" thought Valentine, as he turned from his master.

A storm was raging in his breast; all the fierce passions of his nature were aroused; rage, grief, terror, and despair, made a hell of his bosom. In passing through the hall, he suddenly dived into the dining-room, poured out and drained a half tumbler of the strong brandy; then he hurried through and out of the front door, to make ready for his flight.

Digitized by Google

These preparations were soon made, and Valentine commenced his journey.

The highway leading to M——, was bordered on one side by the hedge of Spanish daggers that skirted the lower cotton-fields of Major Hewitt's plantation, and on the other side by a causeway, that shut off an extensive cypress swamp that formed a portion of Mr. Waring's estate. Avoiding the middle of the road, Valentine leaped over the causeway, and, though he waded half a leg deep in water, he made his way safely under the shelter of the wall and the shadow of the trees.

He had waded thus a mile, on his way toward the city, when the sound of a voice, singing a Methodist hymn, and approaching from the opposite direction, arrested his attention. He knew the hymn, and the voice, that, in turn, sang and intoned it, and, by them, recognised, before seeing, Elisha, the colored class-leader of his own congregation, the man who had that morning brought the first news of Fannie's illness. A new, intense anxiety seized him. Elisha came from the direction of the city. "Might he not bring some later intelligence of Fannie?" he inquired of himself, as he hastened to climb the wall of the causeway, and peered through the parasitical vines that clung to the top, to survey the scene.

Lying between the dark-hued cypress swamp and the high hedge that shut off the cotton-fields, the road stretched westward, one long irregular vista of yellow light shining in the last rays of the setting sun; and solitary, except for the lonely figure of the old negro preacher, who, stick and bundle slung across his shoulder, came trudging onward, and beguiling his way with chanting the refrain of a wild weird revival hymn, in strange keeping with the time and circumstances—

"Go, wake him! Go, wake him!
Judgment day is coming!
Go, wake him! Go, wake him!
Before it is too late!".

Digitized by Google

"Hist! Elisha! Elisha!" called Valentine in a hushed, eager voice.

"Who dar?" exclaimed the old negro, starting back so forcibly that the stick and bundle vibrated on his shoulder.

"It is I, Elisha! Come here, quickly. How is Fannie, my dear, suffering Fannie? Quickly! You have seen her since morning?" cried Valentine, in a low, vehement tone.

"Brudder Walley! I 'clar'; de werry man I lookin' arter!" said the old creature, approaching the causeway.

"Tell me! tell me! how is Fannie?" cried Valentine, impatiently.

"Ah, chile! we-dem mus' 'mit to de will o' Marster," sighed the old preacher.

"For Heaven's sake be plain! Is she—is she still *living?*" questioned the youth, in an agony of anxiety.

"Wur, when I lef' dar, chile! wur, when I lef' dar! Dat all I can say for sartain 'bout libbin'."

Valentine groaned deeply, asking—

"When did you see her? Tell me every thing—every thing you know about her."

"I happen in dar, to 'quire arter her, 'bout noon. I fin her all alone, berry low, berry low, 'deed. Flies, like a cloud, settled on her face; she onable to lif' her han', drive 'em 'way; lip bake wid thust; and she onable han' hersef a drap o' water."

"Oh, God! and the child—the child!"

"'Prawlin' on de floor, kivered with flies an' dirt, cryin' low an' weak, like, for hunder."

"Elisha, I must hurry; I must fly! Turn back, and walk a little way with me, while you tell me more; but if you see any one coming or going on the road, whistle, to warn me, for I have no permit," said Valentine, dropping behind the causeway, and plunging along through the water, toward the city.

Digitized by Google

They could no longer see each other, and their conversation was carried on over opposite sides of the causeway.

"How you gwine cross bridge widout 'mit, Brudder Walley?"

"I don't know; I must try. Tell me more about Fannie."

"Well, *you* know, 'out my tallin' you, how I tuk up de chile offen de flure, an' wash it, an' dress it, and git milk, and feed it. An' how I go for water, and wash *her* face, and give her drink, an' fan de flies offen her, till she come to her min', like; an' how I'd stay 'long o' her till dis time, ony when she come to herself, she put her two hans togedder, so she did, de chile, and begged an' prayed me to come arter you, her 'dear Walley,' to come an' see her once more 'fore she died, an' take de poor baby home long o' you. An' so, dough I done travel dis yer yode once afore to-day. I takes my staff in my han' an' I sets off; an', franks be to de Lor', dey can't sturve *me* from trav'lin de highway, dough I daren't now-a-day put my fut *offin* it, or onto one o' der plantashunes. So, now, bress de Lor', here I *is;* an' long as I wur so hoped up as to fall in 'long o' you, all I got to do now is, to 'company of you back to de city."

In a few earnest, fervent words, Valentine thanked his friend, and then, saving all his breath, and concentrating all his energies, in silence he toiled on, knee-deep in water and ankle-deep in mud, through the cypress swamp toward the city.

Old Daddy Elisha took up the burden of his hymn, and sang or intoned various portions of that weird melody as he walked.

Valentine, behind the causeway, in the shadow and the silence, passed unquestioned; but Elisha was frequently hailed by some vigilant member of the voluntary police. If personally known to the questioner, he was allowed to pass; if not, he was required to show his papers; a light had to

Digitized by Google

be struck to examine them, and all this took up so much time, that although Elisha had the high road to walk upon, and Valentine the swamp to wade through, the latter far outstripped the former, and arrived first at the bridge over the A—— river.

To cross this bridge was the only means from this direction of reaching the city; but the bridge was guarded at both ends by the patrol, or voluntary police; to elude their vigilance was the only desperate part of Valentine's undertaking.

The river was broad, deep, and strong in current; no one had ever dreamed of the feat of swimming across it. It was bordered on this side by a marsh so deep that, in the attempt to pass it, a man of moderate size and strength must have been swallowed up.

The bridge was a continuation of the road and causeway, flanked by parapets extending across the river, and joining the road on the opposite side.

Valentine never thought of the impossible feat of wading the marsh and swimming the river, neither did he dream of attempting to cross the bridge in the very face of the patrol guard that twice before had arrested him; but he projected a scheme almost equally wild and hopeless. This plan was to cross the river by clambering along the water side of this parapet—a plan involving less risk of discovery by the patrol, certainly—but undertaken at the most imminent peril of death, by losing hold and dropping into the river below.

Valentine waded on through the cypress swamp, until the trees grew more sparsely, and the mud under the water became deeper and more treacherous as it merged into the marsh nearest the river.

The poor fellow then clambered along, now on the broken causeway, his eyes all on fire with vigilance, and now dropping down into the swamp, and so in more peril and diffi-

Digitized by Google

culty he went on, until he reached the place where the marsh merged into the river, and the road and causeway into the bridge and parapet.

Here he heard the patrol guard in their little guard-house laughing and talking over their drink, for they too, had to keep the pestilence at bay with alcohol.

Here he attempted to gain the parapet; and in doing so set in motion some alarum bell, at whose first peals he found himself suddenly surrounded, and in the hands of the patrol.

"My good fellow, that feat has been tried once before, so we prepared for the second, you understand," said one of his captors.

They all knew Valentine; with most of them he was a great favorite, though to others he was, for the sole reason of his natural superiority, very obnoxious.

While Valentine stood overwhelmed with despair, he discerned Major Hewitt among the party; and gathering some hope from the presence of that gentleman, he clasped his hands, and appealing to him, said—

Oh, Major Hewitt, you know me, sir! You have known me from childhood! Your dear lady knew me too, and was very kind to the poor quadroon boy, when he was a child. And you know my poor little Fannie, too! Sir, my heart is breaking—that is nothing, but she is dying! Sir, my wife is dying, *alone*—not of the fever only, but of starvation, of thirst, of neglect, of bereavement of all aid; and she sends to me, sir—sends to pray me to come and see her poor face for the last time, and take her orphan baby from her dead arms, lest it die too! You are powerful, Major Hewitt! Speak the word, and these gentlemen will let me pass!"

"Valentine, my poor boy, if your sorrow had not crazed you, you would understand at once that I cannot do so! But, I tell you what I can do for you; I can persuade these

Digitized by Google

gentlemen from detaining you in the guard-house, and I can write a note of intercession to your master. Return to him, Valentine—take my horse! There he stands; go to Mr. Waring; tell him what you have told me! Give him my note; he will not refuse you the permit, and when you have it, ride back hither as fast as you please," said the Major.

He scribbled a note in haste. Valentine mounted the horse, received the missive, and, thanking the Major from the depths of his heart rode off. He met and hailed Elisha, told him in a few words what had passed, and added—

"Go on to the city, Elisha! Go to my dear Fannie! Tell her, if she can still hear your words, that I shall be with her in two hours, or die in the effort. No! do not tell her a word to alarm her! Say *I will certainly be with her in two hours!* For I will! despite of earth and h—ll, I will!"

Valentine gallopped swiftly toward home, reached the lawn gate, sprang from his horse, secured the bridle, and hastened up to the house. There was no one in front; he entered the hall, looked into the dining-room; it was empty; he ran in, poured out a glass of brandy, drank it at a draught, and passed through the house to the back piazza, where he found his master, pacing up and down the floor. Mr. Waring had grown heated and angry between the frequent potations and the irritations of the day.

"Well, sir!" he said, turning abruptly to Valentine, "What now? How dare you enter my presence again, after your insolent conduct of this afternoon?"

"Master Oswald, I am very sorry if, in my great trouble, I was surprised into saying any thing wrong. Will you read this note, sir?" said Valentine, trying, for Fannie's dear sake, to quell the raging storm in his bosom.

Oswald Waring took the note with a jerk, tore it open impatiently, and, casting his eyes over it with a scornful curl of his lip, tossed it away, exclaiming—

Digitized by Google

"Tush! Major Hewitt is a fool! Where did you get that, sir?"

Valentine hesitated.

"I ask you where you got that note, sir?"

"From Major Hewitt's own hand, Master Oswald," replied Valentine, at last.

"By ——! don't prevaricate with me, sir! Where did you see Major Hewitt, then? That is the question!"

Again Valentine was silent.

"What the demon do you mean, sir, by treating my questions with this contemptuous silence?" demanded Mr. Waring angrily.

"Master Oswald!" began Valentine, seriously, impressively—"I will answer your question truly; but, first, let me beg you, let me *pray* you, by all your hopes of salvation, to listen to me favorably; for I swear to you by all my faith in Heaven, that it is the very last time I will make the appeal!"

"I am glad to hear it, you troublesome, confoundedly spoiled rascal! For it is the very last minute that I will bear to be trifled with!"

"I met Major Hewitt on the bridge"——

"On the bridge! On the bridge! Why, you insolent scoundrel; do you dare to stand there and tell me to my face that, in direct violation of my command, you attempted to go to town?"

"Sir! sir! listen to me! my worst fears are confirmed! My poor Fannie is dying, as I feared she might die—alone! deserted! dying not only of pestilence, but of famine and thirst, and every extremity of wretchedness! She sent a faithful messenger, praying me to come and see her once more, but once more, to close her eyes and receive the orphan child. Oh! could I disregard such an appeal as that? would not any man, or, I was about to say, any beast, risk life, and more than life, if possible, to obey such

Digitized by Google

a sacred call? I would have perilled my soul! *Can* you blame me?"

"They turned you back! they did right! Thank Heaven that I am disposed to consider *that* sufficient punishment under the circumstances and am ready to forget your fault. Go, leave me, sir—stop! *into* the house! not *out* of it! you're not to be trusted, sir."

A volcano seemed burning and raging in the young man's breast; nevertheless, he controlled himself with wonderful strength, while he still pleaded his cause.

"Major Hewitt felt my position, sir! he had compassion on me, and wrote that note. Give heed to it, sir! The time may come, when, on your own death-bed, or by the sick bed of one you love, and fear to lose, and pray for, it may console and bless you to remember the mercy you may now show to me; the Good Being has said, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' Give me the permit, sir! let me go and comfort my dying Fannie! Oh! I do beseech you!"

"Will you have *done* worrying me? Major Hewitt is an old dotard! The mercy you selfishly crave for yourself would be cruelty to all the other negroes! Once more, and for the last time, I tell you, and I *swear* it by all the demons, I will *not* give you the permit!"

"Then, by the justice of Heaven, I will go without it!"

"WHAT?"

"I will go without it! If I cannot pass the bridge, I will swim the river! Aye, if it were a river of fire!" exclaimed Valentine, losing all self-control, and breaking into fury.

"Why, you audacious villain! You shall not stir from this house!"

"Neither man on earth nor demon from h—ll shall stop me!" broke forth the man, in a voice of thunder, striding off.

Digitized by Google

In an instant Mr. Waring had intercepted him, holding up a light cane, and exclaiming—

"Stand back, you villain!"

Valentine came on with the evident intention of attempting to pass.

Mr. Waring met him with a sudden, sharp blow with his cane across the face.

And as Valentine, giddy, and blinded for an instant with the blood that streamed from the cut, staggered backward, Mr. Waring, by another heavy stroke with the loaded end of the cane, felled him to the floor, and proceeded to follow up his victory with several other severe blows.

But Valentine was struggling to his feet, and at last sprang up—reeled, righted himself, cleared the blood from his eyes, glared around; and just as Mr. Waring had broken his cane with a final stroke over his shoulder, Valentine saw and seized a heavy oaken stool, and, aiming one fatal blow with all his force, struck his master in the face! The heavy leg of the oaken stool, aimed with all the strength of madness, crushed the eye—entered the brain, and Oswald Waring fell, never to rise again!

But Valentine was maddened! frenzied! and showered blows upon the dying man like one unconscious of his acts, until the agonized screams of women brought him slightly to his senses, when he found himself seized between Mrs. Waring, who was, amid her frantic shrieks, trying to pull him away, and Phædra, who was crying, distractedly, "Oh! Valentine, you've murdered him!"

He glared from one to the other, in the amazed, bewildered manner of one half wakened from a horrible dream; looked at the mutilated form before him; looked at the strange weapon in his hand—the foot-stool, with its legs clotted with blood and hair; and, then, with a violent start, and an awful change of aspect, as if, for the first time, the reality, the horror, and the magnitude of his crime had

Digitized by Google

burst upon his consciousness, he stood an instant, and casting the weapon from him, broke from the hands of the women, cleared the porch at a bound, rushed across the yard, leaped the fence, crossed the road, and plunged into the shadows of the cypress swamp beyond.

* * * * * *

That night as Fannie lay on the wretched bed of her poor room, in darkness and solitude, and in the semi-delirium of fever, suddenly an apparition, like some ghastly phantom of her husband, gleamed out from the surrounding shadows, stooped over, raised her in its ghostly arms, chattered, raved wildly, incomprehensibly, and—was lost; whether really from the room, or only from her failing consciousness, is not certain—and, indeed, how much of this scene was an actual occurrence, and how much of it was the mere phantasmagoria of frenzy, the sufferer never knew!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APPARITION.

Ye seem to look on me with asking eyes!
Listen! and I will tell a fearful story!
Since I remember aught about myself,
A strange heart sickness almost like to death,
A deep remorse for some unacted crime,
For some imposible, nameles wickedness,
Was on me—in its prophecy I lived;
No wretch dragg'd on to execution
E'er felt more horrid pangs than then stirr'd up
My spirit with remorseful agony.—*John Wilson.*

EIGHTEEN months had passed since the murder of Oswald Waring, and yet the murderer had not been apprehended. Though, upon the night of that fatal catastrophe, both the regular and volunteer police had turned out in great numbers, and scattered themselves over the neighborhood in pursuit of the criminal; though trained sleuth-hounds had been made to smell his clothing, and had been set upon his scent; though, thus with men and dogs, the authorities had hunted him throughout the State, and had offered the largest rewards for his betrayal or apprehension, this length of time had passed, and he had not been arrested.

Mr. Waring having died intestate, his property, according to the laws of that Commonwealth, fell to the next of kin.

His childless widow inherited none of her late husband's wealth, but returned to New Orleans, and thence retired to the country, to live upon her own reserved patrimony.

The plantation fell into other hands, and the planter passed out of memory.

Valentine, with his crime and his fate, overlaid by newer

Digitized by Google

excitements, was already sinking into oblivion. He was supposed to have escaped from the State. But there were three faithful friends who knew that, in all this time, the miserable young man had never left the neighborhood, or wandered five miles from the blood-stained floor of his crime.

Phædra was set free. The quadroons and mestizzas, with all their fiery vehemence of temperament, have perhaps less of real vital stamina than any other race. They cannot bear up under any great mental or physical pressure. Phædra, by the terrible blow that had fallen upon her, was crushed into premature age and decrepitude. And as a useless old crone, she was suffered by her new master to retire to a lone cabin, in the pine barrens above the cypress swamp, and, without being required to work, was supplied with rations of food and clothing upon an equal footing with the plantation laborers.

But this poor Naomi, in her desolation, had also her Ruth.

Fannie had almost miraculously recovered from the yellow fever; and, in the mental imbecility that had attended her convalescence, she had been long shielded from the knowledge of the calamity that had fallen upon them all; and at last so gradually did the facts of the catastrophe enter her mind, that she could never after say when or how she first learned the sum of her misery; and thus she was spared the sudden shock that must certainly have proved fatal to her.

No one could look upon that fragile form, and thin face, with its fair, transparent pallor, and large, mournful eyes, and not know her heart was breaking.

What kept her life power going?

Something that was not the love of her child, or of her poor old mother! Something that occasionally varied that look of hopeless, incurable sorrow, with a wild and startled

Digitized by Google

expression of extreme terror, suggestive of insanity. Some people thought it *was* insanity, but they were mistaken; her reason was sound though her heart was broken.

Fannie kept a little thread and needle shop; she owed this little shop to the benevolence of Mrs. Waring; for, to the honor of that poor lady be it spoken, even in the midst of her own awful sorrow, she had remembered and succored her humble sister in adversity. Fannie's little shop thrived moderately, and afforded herself and child a decent living, and the means of alleviating some of the miseries and adding to the few comforts of her poor mother.

Early every Saturday evening, Fannie would close her little shop, and take her child and walk out to Phædra's cabin, to remain until Monday morning. And these seasons, spent in reading the Scriptures, in prayer, and in mutual consolations, were the least unhappy in these poor women's lives.

Phædra's decrepitude confined her closely at home.

But the brothers and sisters of her church did not leave her alone in her sorrow. They came frequently, they ministered to all her necessities, material and spiritual, as far as she had need, and they had power. They held a weekly prayer-meeting at her house.

And these Thursday evening meetings were sources of great comfort to the desolate woman.

Fannie was frequently present at them. And the old negro preacher, Elisha, was invariable in his punctual attendance. There was also another, a constant, though an unknown and unsuspected, worshiper among them.

Valentine's name had long died off from every tongue, as his memory seemed to have expired from every heart. Even in comforting Phædra, her friends never designated the nature of her grief; and, in praying for the Lord's mercy upon their "aged sister in her sore affliction," they never named that affliction's *cause*. And though the un-

Digitized by Google

happy man was remembered in their petitions, it was in silence and in secrecy.

One Thursday evening, while the March winds were piping through the pine barrens, Phædra was holding a prayer-meeting in her cabin.

There were about twenty negroes, both men and women, present.

Among them was the old preacher Elisha, who led the devotions.

Fannie was also present, with her child. And the look of wild anxiety that occasionally varied the heart-broken expression of her face seemed now fixed; her usually patient, suffering countenance was absolutely haggard with terror, and strong shudders shook her frame.

Phædra watched her with great uneasiness.

Meantime the meeting went on in its services, and they sang, prayed, and exhorted in turn. It was not what is technically called a "good" meeting. Few seemed to enjoy the privilege of prayer, or to possess the gift of exhortation. The very singing was tame and lifeless. There seemed to be some spell of heaviness cast over all. At last, toward the close of the evening, an aged brother arose, and began in a strain of such wild eloquence, as deep, earnest, fervid emotions confer upon untutored minds, to exhort his brethren and sisters of the church upon the subject of their apathy and lukewarmness. I can do no justice to that wild, eyrie style of oratory. It impressed, affected and strongly excited his hearers. He concluded with *outre* expressions and gesticulations:

"And *why*, my brethren, is this freezing spell of spiritual cold cast over us? *Why* can we not pray, or exhort, or sing, or take sweet counsel together? *Why* can we not love, or fear, or *feel*? *Why* will not the Spirit of God come down to us? *Why* will not the Lord inspire and accept our prayers? Is it because there is "some accursed

Digitized by Google

thing hidden" among us? Is there an Achan in our camp? I charge you, brother, sister, whoever you be, repent! speak! cast the foul sin from your soul!"

He was interrupted by a deep, hollow voice that proceeded from an obscure corner, where a seeming old woman sat crouching; her form enveloped in a long cloak, her head hidden in a deep sun-bonnet.

"Yes! there is 'an accursed thing hidden' in your midst! and *I* am the Achan in your camp!" And the figure arose, and the cloak fell, and the bonnet was dropped, and the stranger stood revealed.

"Valentine! Valentine!" cried Faunie, in a voice of agony.

He crossed quickly through the astonished group, to the spot where she cowered. He stooped and spoke to her a few earnest words, and sat her down where she could drop her poor young head upon the lap of the trembling, sorrow-stricken Phædra; while he stood up and gazed upon the crowd who remained, stunned with consternation into silence.

Valentine was frightfully changed in the last eighteen months; his flesh had wasted from his bones, until it left him almost a walking skeleton; his skin had darkened, and his eyes had sunken, and concentrated their fires until they burned like two imbedded stars; his voice was cavernous. While the negroes present returned his gaze in silent awe, he spoke:

"A price is on my head! the Governor, or the State, will purchase and emancipate any man here who will deliver me up to death. It is written, that 'a murderer shall hang on a tree!' It is every man's duty to deliver, if he can, a felon up to justice! It is every man's duty here to procure, if he can, his own freedom! Therefore, it is *doubly* some man's duty to take me into custody. I have determined to die for my deed! Doubtless, I could go at

Digitized by Google

any time, and surrender to the authorities. But in that case I should not do the little good I am now desirous of doing. I should not in dying procure some one of you his freedom! Therefore, I wish that one of you take me in custody, and attend me to M——. Come, choose! elect, or cast lots, for him who is to be the freeman. Brother Portiphar"——

Before Valentine could say another word, the old preacher, Elisha, who had been gradually getting over his astonishment, and recovering his self-possession, climbed over stools and chairs and the crouching forms of women and children, and made his way toward Valentine, whom he embraced with his left arm, while he closed his lips, by laying over them his right hand.

"Hush, Brudder Walley, hush! you don't know what you'se a sayin' of. You'se a prophecyin' of de *ole law* 'stead o' de *new gospel!* 'Sides which, would you temp' any brudder here to sin an' slave his 'mortal soul, sake 'o freein' of his poor perishin' body? Hush, brudder Walley, an' let me prophecy. Bredren and sisters, is der a man or a 'woman in de soun' o' my voice as 'ould 'cept his free papers on de terms as brudder Walley offers—at de price of a brudder's life an' a sister's happiness? Which ob yer here 'ould buy his freedom wid the price ob Walley's blood, and Phædra's and Fannie's tears? Would *you*, brudder Portiphar? or you sister Deely? or you? or you? No, not one ob you. Now, brudders an' sisters, I'se got a proposition to make. Fust, bolt dat door, brudder Isaac, an' see to de fastenin' o' dat winder, sister Hera; no knowin' who'se 'bout. Now, let's speak low. An' what I want to propose is dis yer: dat ebery brudder makes a pledge afore he leabes dis room to be silent as to which has happen here dis night. Let brudder Walley no more be lef' in de power an' temptations ob de enemy; let him feel hissef free to 'tend our prayer-meetins here in peace an' safety, for all as is hap-

Digitized by Google

pened of to-night. Let us pray wid him, an' try to 'lieve his poor soul ob its load o' sin an' sorrow!"—

Elisha would have spoken longer, but here Portiphar arose, and said—in effect—that he did not fully agree with brother Elisha; that, he doubted whether they should be doing right to conceal Valentine, especially when the conscience of the latter urged him to the expiation of his crime.

Elisha could scarcely wait for the other to finish his remarks before he arose in a hurry, and said—in effect, if not in these words, and with some vehemence, also—that he was the last to make light of the guilt that Valentine had brought upon his own soul, but that he also knew, and no one else knew so well, the maddening provocation that had driven him to his crime. That he prayed the sin might be washed away by repentance and faith in the Redeemer; that, for this reason, he wished Valentine to feel safe in coming among them, to share their prayers, and hymns, and exhortations, and all their other means of grace—that, undismayed and undistracted by the worldly sorrows of imprisonment, trial, and impending execution, he might have time to work out his salvation! That therefore he should shield his sinful brother until they could prove to him that the gallows was a means of grace, "which I don't believe it *is*," concluded old Elisha, as he sat down in quiet triumph, for he saw that every man and woman among the warm-hearted creatures present coincided in sentiment with himself, and that Portiphar was put down and silenced, if not convinced.

And Phædra and Fannie ventured once more to raise their drooping heads, and look about them. Alas, for their feeble hopes! Valentine, still standing, and still agonized, waved his hand for silence and attention, and then spoke.

He told them he had already repented, if that were the word to express the horrible remorse of blood-guiltiness that had long preyed upon his heart, and consumed his flesh

Digitized by Google

and blood, and left him what they saw him. But did they, he asked them, suppose that he had repented only *since* that fatal deed? No, no! but for years and years before that catastrophe he had suffered with that uncommitted crime. Did they think that the act was premeditated, then? Yes, in *one* sense, it was premeditated, although entirely unintentional, and so abhorrent that he would have gladly died to escape committing it. The deed was premeditated, inasmuch as it had long loomed up before him, a black mountain * in his forward path of life, from which it was impossible to turn aside; to which every breath and every step drew him nearer and nearer. That the first time he caught a glimpse of this awful phantom of his future was while he and Oswald were still boys. He had been provoked and exasperated to phrensy by his playmate, and, in his utter madness, had struck and tried to kill him. The reaction from that fit of passion had been terrible. The next occasion upon which arose darkly before him this inevitable doom, was when his master and himself were youths. One night he was driving Oswald home; both were intoxicated; they quarrelled; his master threatened him with the lash; he lost his reason and his very eyesight, and all his senses, in a dark tempest and whirlwind of mad and blind fury, and struck with all his strength to destroy. By Heaven's mercy that blow was not fatal. But the recovery of his own senses from that phrensy of anger was more horrible than any thing he had ever before experienced. From that time he had never been able to exorcise the haunting presence of that black phantom, standing waiting for him at the terminus of his earthly path, from which he could not escape; to which every breath and every step drew him nearer and nearer! From that time he had felt that in some baleful moment of extreme exaspe-

* I use here the precise words of the unhappy man, as they were repeated to me.

Digitized by Google

ration, some irresponsible moment of mad and blind passion, he should strike a fatal blow. Yet he said he agonised in soul to escape that black crime; he struggled to conquer his angry passions; he sought the grace of God, and hoped that he had possessed it; he swore off from alcohol, that stimulus might not be added to his other excitements to anger—to the inevitable provocations arising from his temperament, position, and circumstances—provocations that were constantly exasperating his soul to madness. For years, he said, no eye but the Lord's had seen the desperate war his spirit had waged with the powers of evil within and around him, and waged successfully, until one trying season, when, in the utter prostration of sorrow and despondency, he had been tempted to place again the maddening glass to his lips—tempted by the sophistry that prescribed the moral poison as a medicine; then he lost the habit and at last the power of self-control, and one fatal day, when amazed and bewildered with exceeding sorrow, and stung to phrensy with the sense of wrong-suffering and cruelty, he had struck the blow that laid his master dead before him.

"Heaven knows I was not thinking of doing it; in my deep sorrow of the preceding days, the phantom of my predestined crime was exorcised. I had not even *that* to warn me; the hour was entirely unguarded. I struck in self-defence. He had intercepted and knocked me down, to prevent me from going to see my sick wife. Blind and giddy, and furious, I struggled to my feet, and seized the first weapon that offered—a three-legged stool—and struck with all my strength; but when I saw the leg crush through his eye and brain, one lightning thought told me that he was killed, and thenceforth all the world was against me, and I against the world; and then waves of blood and clouds of fire seemed to roll up around me, and rage in a horrible tempest; reason fled utterly, and I knew nothing

Digitized by Google

more until near midnight, when I came to myself upon the floor of Fannie's room; and even then, in my vague remorse and horror of half-conscious blood-guiltiness, I seemed to be some other thing than myself—perhaps some lost soul in perdition! Brother Elisha, Heaven bless him, was bending over me. It was to him I owed the preservation of my life. It was by his counsel and assistance that I disguised myself in poor Fannie's clothing, which fitted me well enough for the purpose. He even crimped and braided my hair, and tied up my head in a woman's turban. And he found and thrust Fannie's free papers in my bosom, and then led me off to his own home. Well, in this disguise, and by keeping very close, I contrived to elude the vigilance of the police, until a surer place of safety was provided for me near this cabin. For eighteen months, I have eluded the police; but think you, my brothers and sisters, that, for *one moment*, I have escaped the avenger of blood? No! no! After the crime, he found me even in the first moments of my waking consciousness; his clutch has never been relaxed from my heart; it compresses now, even to suffocation; the death that you would save me from, I die every hour of my life; I can bear it no longer; I must die once for all, and have done with it; I should have resigned myself into the hands of the law, and, in the final expiation, long since found rest, but for Fannie's grief and terror. But now, even her tears and prayers must not hinder me; even for her peace, it is better I should give myself up to die, and have it over, for now she lives in the midst of alarms; hereafter, when all is over she will at least have quiet."

"Quiet! yes, the quiet of death, for I never can outlive you, Valley!" said Fannie in a low tone of despair.

He laid his hand fondly on her bowed head, but without comment, resumed his discourse.

"I was about to surrender myself to the public authori-

Digitized by Google

ties, when I reflected that, by giving myself up to my brothers in the church, I might confer the blessing of freedom upon some one among you, since that was one of the rewards offered for my arrest. Here I am! Which of you will make himself a free man to-night ?"

He paused a moment, looking around upon the little assembly; and then fixing his eyes upon a handsome, intelligent-looking, young man, to whom the gift of freedom might well seem the most desirable of goods, he said—

"Brother Joseph, will you take me into custody ?"

"May the enemy of souls take *me* in custody, and never let me go, when I do!" promptly replied young Joe.

"That's you, my boy! And may the same fate befall any one else who would do the like!" exclaimed old Elisha, emphatically.

A murmur of approbation ran around the little assembly, and revealed the fact that the feelings of the majority were with the speakers.

"Brother Walley! You think yourself a very guilty man. *But*, no one ever craved freedom more than you did, and yet you *know* you would never o' bought your freedom at the price o' any man's life, no matter how fur forfeit his life might be! An' now, Brudder Walley, please don't think us so much wus than yourself."

When the little assembly heard this, with one voice (and one exception) they declared that they would die before they would betray Valentine. And Elisha, to confirm their faith, went around with the Bible in his hand, and administered to each an oath of fidelity and silence upon the subject of Valentine and the transactions of that night.

But when he came to old Portiphar, the latter declared that he had a scruple against taking an oath on the Evangelists, but readily gave his promise to be secret.

Valentine, with grateful but troubled looks, regarded these proceedings, until Phædra and Fannie, taking advan-

Digitized by Google

tage of the popular sentiment, came to him, and, one on each side, seized his hands, besought him, for their sakes, not to cast away his slender chance of safety.

What was to be done? Love was almost irresistible, and life perhaps, even at the worst was sweet; he had come to the resolution to deliver up himself to justice; but that could be done at any time; and for the present it could be deferred; he embraced his mother and his wife, and bade them rest quietly, as he would proceed no farther in the matter now.

The meeting soon after broke up.

One by one the members of the little community took leave of Valentine, promising to guard his secret, and remember him in their prayers.

After all the others had departed, old Portiphar still lingered. And when the room was quite clear, he called Valentine to the door, and said—

"Brudder Valley, I'se a poor man, wid a fam'ly o' chillun, an' ef so be you'se 'termin' on gibbin' o' yourself up, I wouldn' min' walkin' far as the squire's office wid you mysef."

"Thank you, Portiphar, I will inform you when I need your services. Good-night," replied the young man, shutting the door upon him.

Portiphar had not proceeded half a dozen steps on his way, before he felt himself seized by the shoulder, and he recognised as his assailant the strapping negro, young Joe, who, holding him tightly, said—

"See here, Daddy Fox! I thought what you was up to; so I stopped to give this 'vice! Ef Valley's took up, we shall all know who slipped the bloodhounds on him, an' then some dark night, somethin' will happen to you so sudden, you won't never know what hurt you! Taint only me! but a great many more is a watchin' of you!"

And with this brief and pithy exordium, Joe released

Digitized by Google

Portiphar, or rather spurned him forward, and went his own way. This threat put the old man in a cold sweat of terror. He knew the strong fellow-feeling among his own class; that, even in the dangerous number of twenty persons, it would keep Valentine's secret; that he himself was suspected as a traitor; that, if Valentine should now be arrested, his own life might not be safe, with those of the meeting who were not professing Christians; and he resolved to guide himself accordingly.

Several weeks passed, in safety, to the wretched young man.

But, released from the awful solitude and silence of his own heavily burdened soul, free to come among a few of his fellow creatures, free to speak of the deep sorrow and remorse that consumed his heart, among those who pitied and shrank not from him, who prayed for and with him, Valentine's mind began to recover its healthy tone; he did not cease to mourn his crime, but he mourned no longer as one without hope; he was again received into the little brotherhood of the church, the simple ceremony being performed in the lone cabin; again he became the man of fervent prayer and eloquent exhortation; and powerful, far more powerful, was he now, through his terrible experiences and profound repentance, than ever he had been.

To his confidant brother Elisha he was accustomed to say:

"I know that I shall not finally escape the earthly punishment of my crime. I know that sooner or later it must come; nor do I wish to avoid it; yet, will I do nothing to hasten its arrival; but when it shall come, I will accept it."

To which Elisha would reply: "Our lives are in the hands of the Lord," or words to that purpose.

Weeks grew into months, spring ripened into summer, and summer waned into autumn, and still Valentine lived unmolested.

Digitized by Google

At length, however, near the last of September, a rumor got afloat that Valentine, the murderer of Mr. Waring, was concealed somewhere in the neighborhood of his late master's residence. How this report first got in circulation, no one seemed to be able to tell; though how the secret, known to twenty people, had been guarded so long, may be more of a subject for conjecture to many minds. Be that as it may, the peace of the unhappy little family was gone forever. Phædra's lonely cabin in the pine barrens and Fannie's humble home in the city were subject to sudden invasions and searchings by day and by night. Their weekly prayer meetings were surprised and broken up. But no trace of Valentine could be discovered; as unexpectedly as he had appeared, so suddenly had he again disappeared; the earth seemed to have swallowed him.

But this could not last forever; and upon the third of October, Valentine was arrested under the following suspicious circumstances:

A police officer, stationed in concealment behind a hedge of Spanish daggers that bordered a lane crossing the highway at right angles, and running midway between the pine ridge and the cypress swamp, saw what seemed a young negro woman coming down the lane. She was poorly and plainly clothed, and wore a long sun-bonnet. There was nothing whatever in her manner or appearance to attract attention. Yet this police officer watched her closely. Presently, coming up the lane from an opposite direction, appeared the figure of an old negro. The policeman favored him also with a share of notice. Meeting the seeming woman, the old man laughed, held out his hand, and exclaimed, in a clear voice—

"Ha! Brudder Walley! Good morning! walking out to take a little air, eh!"

"Hush! for Heaven's sake, don't speak so loud, or call

Digitized by Google

me by name. Yes, I have stolen forth for a breath of fresh air."

"Glad to hear it. Which way is you walking, Brudder Walley?" inquired the other, raising his voice.

"For the Lord's sake, I beg you will not call me by my name, or speak so loud!"

"No danger at all, Brudder Walley, no one in sight!" exclaimed the old man, louder than ever. "Which way did you say you wer' goin', Brudder Walley?"

"I am going home."

"Well, Brudder Walley, let me go long wid you dis time. I'd like to see sister Phædra," pleaded the old negro.

"Come along, then, but be careful."

They walked up the lane together, and then struck into the pines. The policeman followed them, and, himself unseen, keeping them in sight, traced them into the cabin of Phædra.

Then having, as it were, pointed his game, he ran back as fast as possible, sprang over the hedge, ran down the lane, crossed the highway, sprang over a second hedge dividing the road from Major Hewitt's plantation, hastened up to that gentleman's house, gave the alarm, procured the assistance of the overseer and the gardener, both Irishmen, and with this reinforcement hastened back to the scene of action.

They found Phædra's cabin quiet enough. To the knock of the policeman, the old woman's voice responded, "Come in."

They entered, and found no one within except Phædra and the old negro preacher, Portiphar—no sign of Valentine. As the cabin contained but one room, with but one door and window, and no loft or out-buildings, the premises were easily searched. The little room was also very scantily furnished; a rag carpet concealed the rough floor,

Digitized by Google

a rude bed stood in one corner, a cupboard in another, an oak chest in a third, a pine table in the fourth; a couple of chairs, a few stools, &c., completed the appointments. The cupboard was opened; the big chest ransacked; the bed and bedstead pulled to pieces; the chimney inspected; but no trace of the fugitive could be found.

Phædra was questioned; but she sadly shook her head and remained dumb.

The old negro preacher was examined, but he replied, evasively, that he had just come, and knew nothing about it, while at the same time he kept his eyes strangely fixed upon the corner of the room occupied by Phædra's bed.

Yet, the policeman had pulled that bed to pieces and found nothing, and now did not know what to make of Portiphar's pertinacious gaze. At last, a bright idea struck him. He took the poker, and began sounding the floor; he went on sounding foot by foot until he approached the bed; turning then, he saw Phædra's face haggard with the most frightful expression of terror and anxiety; dragging the bedstead away by main force, he began to sound the corner; the floor returned a hollow echo; he was satisfied.

It was but the work of a moment to turn up the carpet, to lift up a loose plank, and to discover the mouth of the excavation below.

He knelt upon his knees, and peered down into the cavern; the mouth only opened in the corner of Phædra's cabin: the cabin itself extended under and beneath the house. He peered down into the darkness for a few moments, and then called, in a not unkindly voice,

"Valentine, my poor fellow, you may as well come out; the game is up with you!"

A moment passed, and then Valentine, indeed, appeared above the opening.

Digitized by Google

"Give me time to change my dress, Mr. Pomfret," he said, for he was still in his woman's gown.

This was granted. The change was soon effected, and he came forth and gave himself up; only saying, as they took him away,

"Mother, tell my friends that the traitor at your side betrayed me to death!" And he regretted these words as soon as they were spoken.

Phædra had not heard them—she seemed praying—she had really fainted.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRIAL.

You few that love me,
And dare be bold to weep for such as I—
My gentle friends and fellows, whom to leave
Is only bitter to me, only dying—
Go with me, like good angels, to mine end,
And when the long divorce of death falls on me,
Make of your prayers one most sweet sacrifice,
And lift my soul to heaven. *Shakspeare.*

THE news of the arrest of Valentine spread rapidly over the city and surrounding country, creating everywhere an intense excitement, and reviving all the deep interest that had been felt two years before, at the epoch of the crime.

This excitement prevailed all around Fannie, yet she knew nothing of it, or at least of its cause. There was no one found willing to carry this sorrowful intelligence to her, whom it most concerned; and she remained in total ignorance of the arrest of her husband until the next day, which being Saturday, she was looking forward, as usual, to an early closing of the shop, and a walk out into the country, to spend the night and the Sabbath with her old mother, and to comfort Valentine, when, unexpectedly, poor Phædra, recovered in some degree from the shock she had received, and accompanied by Elisha, arrived at her daughter's humble little home.

With all possible consideration and gentleness, the old negro preacher broke the intelligence of Valentine's imprisonment to Fannie.

But, alas! if all fateful antecedents had not led her to anticipate this consequence, what further possible prepara-

Digitized by Google

tion could fit her to receive such intelligence? And, indeed, in any event, what preparation would soften such calamity?

Poor Fannie's frame was very delicate, and her heart by many heavy blows had become physically feeble, and was, at best, a very imperfect instrument of her will. Had it not been so, the poor girl might have better borne up; as it was, she succumbed to the new blow, and a night of dangerous illness followed.

Yet, the next morning, Fannie insisted on leaving her bed, and though apparently more dead than alive, and having to be supported between Phædra and old Elisha, she went to the prison to see Valentine.

All prisons are, of course, wretched places; but the jail of M—— was one of the most wretched of its kind. Comparatively small, shamefully overcrowded, close, ill-ventilated, and pestilential, it insured nothing but the safe custody of the bodies of its miserable inmates. Evidently, reform had not even looked upon its outer walls, far less opened one of its doors or windows.

For greater security, Valentine had been confined in the condemned cell. A slight irregularity that, but one of which no one had the right to complain. Although, under circumstances less tragic, it must have seemed ludicrous to associate the graceful and almost girlish delicacy of poor Valentine's figure with danger to the security of bolts and bars and prison walls.

Howbeit, in the condemned cell Valentine was placed, and there Fannie and her companions found him.

Valentine received them with great composure, that was only slightly disturbed when Fannie, upon first seeing him, threw herself, with a cry of passionate sorrow, upon his bosom.

When the turnkey had left the cell, and locked them all in together, Valentine addressed himself to soothing Fan-

Digitized by Google

nie. And after a while, favored by the exhaustion that followed her vehement emotion, he succeeded in quieting her.

After a little conversation, the old preacher invited all to join him in prayer, and, kneeling down, offered up a fervent petition for the divine mercy on the prisoner. Through the whole of the interview, all were impressed by the perfect composure and cheerfulness of Valentine. He seemed like a man who had cast a great weight from his breast, or in some other way had been relieved from a heavy burden. Though his manner was perfectly free from any charge of reprehensible levity, there was certainly an elasticity of spirit in all he said or did, that was as strange as it was entirely sincere and unaffected. Was this because he felt that he had nothing further to hope or fear, and trouble had ceased with uncertainty? Whatever was the cause, his mood happily influenced others, and they grew quiet and cheerful in his company.

"Dearest friend," Valentine said, afterward, to Elisha, "these things that have occurred were obliged to happen; no power on earth could have prevented them; and the power of Heaven never intervenes to perform miracles, or to avert evil at the expense of moral free agency. I am not a predestinarian, Brother Elisha, but I know that certain causes must produce certain effects, as surely as given figures produce known results. As I told you before, I always knew that this was to be my fate. From the first moment that I was provoked to strike Oswald Waring, I have seen this crime and this fate before me, like a horrible cloud. I would try to close my eyes to it—try to forget it. In vain—for even in my brightest moments it would fall suddenly like a funeral pall around me, blackening all the light of life. When poor Oswald Waring lay dead before me, I did not realize the crime more intensely than I had by presentiment an hundred times before. And when I

Digitized by Google

shall stand, as I shall very soon do, upon the scaffold's fatal drop, with the cord around my neck, and the cap that is about to shut out the last glimpse of this world's sunshine from my eyes, descending over my face—even in that supreme moment, I know I cannot feel the situation more acutely than I have done prophetically a thousand times before!

"This prophetic feeling was the secret horror of my whole life. I dared not confide it to any one; therefore it preyed upon my spirits, driving me at times almost to insanity. Yet, friends, there was nothing occult in this presentiment. It was but the swift and sure inference of certain effects from certain causes. It was rather a helpless *foresight*, than *second* sight. Well, the worst has come! I am calmer and happier now than I have been for many long, sad years. This fate is not nearly so horrible in reality as it seemed in anticipation. The only earthly trouble that I have is in the thought of my little family. Comfort them, Brother Elisha! Help them to bring all the power of religion to their support. Time and religion cures the worst of sorrows; it will cure theirs. Only, in the meantime—in the hour of their greatest trial, and the first dark days that follow it—watch over them, sustain and comfort them, and lift up their hands to God, Elisha."

"I will—I will, indeed, Brudder Walley," promised the old preacher.

Valentine was not left alone in his trials. The friends of the Methodist church flocked around, and one or another was always with him. The clergymen of every denomination took a great interest in his situation and character. And the better Valentine was known, the deeper this interest grew. In advance of his trial, the press took up his case, and the papers were filled with accounts of visits that this or that gentleman had made him; conversations that one or another clergyman had held with him in his cell; and with descriptions of his good looks, graceful man-

Digitized by Google

ners, intelligence, knowledge, conversational powers, and eloquence—all "so remarkable in one of his race and station." It would seem, indeed, as if, unhappily, the good points of the unhappy young man had never been known or suspected, until crime had brought him prominently before the public. If there was any thing to be regretted in the great sympathy that was felt for him, it was, that the sympathizers kept up too much fuss around him for the good of one of his excitable temperament, and thus prevented the self-recollection and sobriety that befitted the solemnity of his situation. Through the kindness of these friends, the best counsel that could be prevailed upon to take up his hopeless cause was retained, to defend Valentine in the approaching trial.

There was one affecting circumstance that occurred just before the sitting of the criminal court. Mrs. Waring had been subpœned to attend as a witness for the prosecution. She came up from Louisiana; and, soon after her arrival in the city, she sought out the poor, little, obscure wife of the prisoner, and gave her what comfort she could impart —telling her, that though she was the principal witness, her testimony would not bear hard upon Valentine, whom she felt persuaded was mad, and unconscious of his acts at the moment she witnessed them. And that she hoped his life might yet be spared, for she felt convinced that capital punishment was in no case a corrector or a preventer of crime. And that, if the trial should terminate unfavorably, she would petition the Governor for a commutation of the sentence. And that *her* petition, under the circumstances, would be the most powerful that could be presented. These and other merciful promises and reviving hopes did the gentle-hearted widow infuse into the poor girl's sinking heart.

And oh! how Fannie knelt, and covered the lady's hands with loving kisses, and bathed them with grateful

Digitized by Google

tears. And Mrs. Waring, when she left her, went directly to the most eminent lawyer in the city—one who had indignantly repulsed a clergyman who wished to retain him for the prisoner—and, after telling him very much what she had told Fannie relative to the character of her own testimony, succeeded in retaining him to defend Valentine; for this gentleman seemed to think that the favorable opinion and testimony of Mrs. Waring would make a very great difference in the respectability, popularity, and security of the cause that he no longer hesitated to embrace.

Of course, there was much diversity of opinion in regard to Mrs. Waring's course. All wondered at her, many censured her, while a few saw in her conduct the perfection of Christian charity. But, like all who have thought and suffered much, and profited by such experience, Mrs. Waring was indifferent to any earthly judgment outside the sphere of her own affections; and so, ignorant and regardless of popular praise or censure, the lady went calmly on her merciful course.

The day of the sitting of the court drew near, when, one morning, a bustle in the gallery leading to Valentine's cell attracted the attention of the latter, and he had just concluded that the officials were bringing in a new prisoner, when the noisy group paused before his own door, unlocked it, and introduced Governor, Major Hewitt's big negro. With a few parting words, the turnkey and the constable left him, went out, and locked the door.

Then for the first time Valentine recovered from his surprise, and spoke to the new-comer.

But Governor, standing bolt upright until his tall figure and large head nearly reached the low ceiling, looked the image of stupor, and answered never a word.

Valentine knew, of course, that he was in desperate trouble, or he would not be in *that* cell. Kindly taking his hand, he led him to the bed, and made him sit down

Digitized by Google

upon it. He was as docile as the gentlest child, though seemingly more stupid than any brute. And it was hours before he recovered sufficiently to tell Valentine the cause of his arrest.

The story gathered from his thick and incoherent talk was this: He himself was a huge, black, unsightly negro, painfully conscious of his personal defects. He was married to Milly, a pretty mulatto woman, whom he loved with the idolatrous affection that often distinguishes his race, and who had loved him in return, for the wealth of goodness under his rude exterior.

And he had been very happy with his wife and two little girls, until the new overseer came.

This person was a young unmarried man, and his name was Moriarty. He took a fancy to Milly; used to stop every day at the door of her cabin, to ask for a drink of water; then, after a while, he got into the habit of going into her cabin to sit down and rest, and was never in a hurry to go away.

If there was any work to be done in the overseer's house, Milly was always sent for to do it, and always detained a long time. Governor was dispatched to labor upon the most remote part of the plantation; and whenever a messenger was required to go upon a distant errand, Governor was selected.

Poor fellow! he was not acute enough to be suspicious, or bad enough to be jealous. On the contrary, he was very good-natured, stupid, and confiding. And he might have gone on forever, without suspecting that there was anything wrong, had not Milly upon every Sunday and holyday appeared in finery better than any of her companions could sport, and so excited their envy, quickened their perceptions, and stimulated their tongues.

And rudely enough were the poor husband's eyes opened, and from that time no more wretched man than Governor

Digitized by Google

lived upon this earth. He expostulated with Milly, who tearfully confessed to receiving presents from the new overseer, and protested her innocence of every thing but their acceptance. And it is probable that up to this time, and for a long time after, Milly, who sincerely loved the ugly but good-hearted father of her children, was innocent of every thing except vanity; and could she have been delivered from the power of the tempter, would have remained blameless.

But there was no such deliverance for her. And now commenced the most troubled life that could be imagined for the husband. He felt that Milly still loved him with undiminished fidelity, but he knew also the power of temptation and of example. How many virtuous women were there, on that or any other plantation? Why, virtue was not taught them—was not expected of them; and if they were born with the instinct, it was soon lost among a class, where licentiousness was the rule, and integrity the exception. The generality of this misfortune among his fellow-slaves—did not make it any the less painful to this poor man to see his beloved Milly tempted from his bosom.

And he saw, with increasing anguish, that Milly, notwithstanding her penitence, and tearful declaration that she would be faithful to Governor forever and forever, could not prevent the daily calls of the overseer at her cabin, and dared not disobey his commands, when he summoned her to work in his house.

Govérnor was still and ever kept at work upon the most distant parts of the plantation, and the overseer still and ever appropriated as much as he possibly could of Milly's time and services. There was no help for them.

Major Hewitt, in many respects a kind master, had, for his peace, long closed his ears to complaints of the slaves against their overseer, and Governor knew full well that his master would hear not one word against Mr. Moriarty.

Digitized by Google

Why lengthen a sad story? All the women of the plantation knew that, sooner or later, Milly would have no right to look down from her pride of integrity upon them. Yet it was some time—more than a year—before she was numbered among the frail ones.

And then, as guilt is so much more circumspect than innocence, poor Governor was deceived into a fool's paradise of confiding love, and led to believe that the overseer had entirely abandoned the persecution of Milly.

This blind confidence lasted until one day, when one of those sudden little breaks of water, so small that its surface might be covered with two hands, yet, withal, the herald of that terror of the Gulf planters, a devastating "crevasse," appeared in the midst of a valuable field, and it became necessary to arrest its progress at onee.

A party of negroes was dispatched to the spot, and Governor was sent with them. In the course of a few hours, the crevasse had made dangerous progress, and they had to work until very late at night. But it was early when the overseer left them.

It was between eleven and twelve o'clock, when a young negro, from the quarters, came down to the works, and, taking Governor aside, whispered something in his ear.

Down went the man's shovel, and away he sprung, and—all on fire with rage and jealousy—a man no longer, but an unreasoning brute—ran and leaped, bounding over everything that came in his way, and taking a bee-line to his cabin, the door of which he burst open.

A moment, and the overseer lay dead, slain by the hand of the injured husband.

Governor did not hurt a hair of Milly's head; even in his mad and blind rage, he had spared *her*, still so beloved. Neither did he attempt to save himself by flight, but lay moaning and groaning upon the cabin floor until he was taken into custody.

Digitized by Google

This was the substance of the story related to Valentine.

"I'se sorry I killed him, Brudder Walley! dough I hardly knowed what I was a doin' of. I'se sorry, dough it was all *so* tryin' from fuss to las'. Yes! I is *berry* sorry, dough it ain't no use to say it, cause I knows how, ef it wur to do ober agin, I should be sure to do it ober agin! so, what's de use o' pentin'?"

Valentine pressed his hand in silence, scarcely knowing what to reply just then, sadly thinking of the many thousands whose positions were just as false, as trying, as maddening, as his own and Governor's had been.

About noon that day, Major Hewitt came into the cell to see his slave. The Major was very much overcome at the sight of Governor, and spoke with great feeling.

"Oh, Governor! my heart bleeds for you, and for what you have done, my poor fellow! Oh! Governor, why, why did you take your revenge in your own hands, in this horrible manner? Why did you not, *long ago*, complain to me? I would have seen you righted."

"Ah, Marse Major, you never would hear no 'plaints wedem made against de oberseer. It's been tried often, and you never would!"

"Yes, but my poor fellow! in such a case I would have listened to your complaint. I would have protected your family peace, at every cost. If necessary, I would have discharged Moriarty. Yours was an exceptional case, and I would have attended to it."

"Ah, Marse Major, honey! I dessay you *think* you would now, as it has come to dis yer! But you wouldn't o' done it, Marse Major, honey! 'deed you wouldn't, 'cause you see it has been *tried afore*, an' you never would listen to nothin' 't all 'bout de oberseer. It's on'y 'cause it's come to dis yer; you *thinks* different," said Governor, sadly, but respectfully, and even affectionately.

Major Hewit did not reply; perhaps he felt that the slave

Digitized by Google

had spoken the truth, for he looked extremely distressed, and told him that he would engage the best counsel to defend him; that no cost should be spared, even to the half of his estate, to save him.

And Major Hewitt kept his word, and hastened to secure the best legal aid to be had for Governor.

The day of the trial was at hand. It was known that *two* were to be tried for similar offenses. But every one was interested in Valentine, and no one, except his master, seemed to care one farthing for Governor. Those who saw him said he was "an ill-looking fellow," and there left the subject.

Valentine was the first arraigned. When his case was fully investigated, it was obvious to all minds, that on the fatal encounter in which Mr. Waring fell, Valentine had struck only in self-defense—only after his own blood had been drawn, and he had been once felled to the floor. But then the blow had been fatal. And though he was well and ably defended, yet the verdict rendered against the prisoner was "Willful Murder." Valentine heard the verdict, and afterward received his sentence quietly, as a matter of course. At its conclusion, he bowed gravely, and was conducted from the court-room.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

THE SCAFFOLD.

Oh! judge none lost, but wait and see,
With hopeful pity, not disdain;
The depth of the abyss may be
The measure of the height of pain.—*Household Words.*

When Valentine's little family circle received information of the verdict that laid low their last hopes, Phædra met the misfortune with that sad resignation which we often see in those whom either time or sorrow has aged, and which we are apt to think owes its calmness as much to the exhausted energies of the sufferer, as to any higher cause. Fannie heard the issue of the trial with wild grief, and a day and night of illness intervened before she could go and see the condemned.

The conviction of Valentine was immediately followed by the arraignment of Governor. The trial of the latter was even shorter than that of the former had been. He was ably defended by the counsel employed by his master; but nothing could have saved him. And the jury, without leaving their seats, brought in their verdict of "Guilty." His sentence followed immediately. It was, however, pitiable to observe that the poor wretch did not understand one-half of what had been done or said during the whole course of his trial. And when he was conducted back to the prison, and locked in with Valentine, he said to the latter,

"Well, Walley, ole marse up dere on de bench put a black nightcap on his head, an' said somethin' 'r other 'bout hangin'; but I reckon he only did it to scare me, 'case I saw by his face how his heart was a *saftening* all de time."

After his condemnation to death, Valentine's friends

Digitized by Google

were more devoted to him than ever. Day and night, one or more of the brethren of the church was with him. And one sister, especially, who was known by the name of "Sister Dely," divided her attentions between him and his little family, who equally, or more, needed comfort. Again the papers were filled with descriptions of this "extraordinary boy," as Valentine was called. Interviews held with him by clergymen were reported at length. His likeness was taken in prison, and wood-cutted in a pamphlet report of his trial. In a word, the unhappy young man became for a while a local notoriety. And this was ascribable, not to the nature of the catastrophe, which unfortunately was but too common in that section of country, but to the individuality and character of the condemned.

And another circumstance connected with this tragedy was so strange that I must not omit to record it. A rumor got out that old Portiphar had betrayed Valentine into the hands of the law, and that a number of negroes in secret meeting had sworn the death of the traitor whenever and wherever either one of them could take him. This matter was carefully investigated by those most interested; but though they could obtain no sort of satisfactory information, yet their suspicions, instead of being dissipated, were so strongly confirmed, that it was deemed advisable for the officers who had arrested Valentine to come out under oath with the declaration that Portiphar had not by the remotest hint put them upon the track, but that the discovery of the fugitive under the disguise of female apparel had been entirely accidental.

This declaration, duly sworn to and attested, was embodied in a short address to be read to the negroes, printed on handbills, and posted and distributed all over the city and surrounding country. And for some little time this was supposed to be quite sufficient to allay excitement and ensure security. But in a day or two it became evident, in

Digitized by Google

some way, that the negroes did not believe the sworn statement of the police officers. And as it was thought best to get rid of unsafe property, Portiphar, who had lurked in concealment for some weeks, was sold by his master to a New Orleans trader, and the neighborhood breathed freely again.

The petition to the Executive for the pardon of Valentine, got up under the auspices of Oswald Waring's widow, failed of success, as every one had predicted that it must. And when this last little glimmering light of earthly hope went down, Valentine seduously addressed himself to preparation for eternity.

It was piteous to observe Governor at this time. Any one, to have seen him, must have perceived at once that *he* was no subject for capital punishment. But no one except his master and Valentine was the least interested in him. Alas! poor wretch, he was not even interested in himself! When the refusal of the Executive to pardon Valentine had been received, it was affecting to see the efforts of Governor to console what he supposed to be the disappointment of his fellow-prisoner.

"Don't you mind, Walley! Dey's only doin dis to scare we! Sho! dey's no more gwine to hang *we*, nor dey's gwine to heave so much *money* in de fire! Sho! we's too *walable*. I heern de gemmen all say what fine walable men we was—'specially *me!* Sho! *dere's* muscle for you!" said Governor, drawing himself up, jerking forward both arms with a strong impetus, and then clapping his hands upon his nether limbs.

"Sho! *You* think dey's gwine to let all dat here go to loss? Ef it were only whippin' now, dey might do it! but making all dis here muscle dead? Sho! what de use o' dead nigger? What good dat do? Sho!"

And, with this strong expletive of contempt, Governor sat down. Strange and sad as was the fact, this poor, stupid creature was thoroughly persuaded that his own and

Digitized by Google

Valentine's life were perfectly safe. He knew that, *living*, he himself was worth at least twelve or fifteen hundred dollars, for he had more than once heard himself so appraised; and that, *dead*, he was worth just so much less than nothing as the cost of his burial would be. And from these facts he drew the inference that he was far too valuable to be executed. And he persisted in looking upon the whole train of events, comprising his arrest, imprisonment, trial and condemnation, with all the pageantry of court-room, judges, lawyers, juries, and officers, only as a solemn show, got up to frighten him and his fellow-prisoner. Nothing could disabuse him of this allusion; for, if once any idea got fixed in his poor, thick head, it was just impossible to dislodge it. In vain Valentine endeavored to enlighten him as to his true position; Governor would reply, with a compassionate look—

"Oh, sho! you's scared, Walley! you's scared! Tell me! I knows better! Dey's not such fools as to hang we! *ca'se what would be de use, you know! Sho!*"

The methodist preachers exhorted and prayed with Governor, to as little purpose. He could not be made to believe in the fact of his fast-approaching death.

"Oh, sho, Walley! I doesn't say nuffin 't all afore dem, 'cause you see 'taint right to give de back answer to de *ministers;* but dey's league 'long o' de oders, Walley! Dey's league 'long o' de oders. Can't scare dis chile wid no sich! Tell you, Walley, dead nigger ain't no use but dead *ex*-pense! So what de use 'o hanging of him? *Sho!*"

This interjection usually finished the argument.

The day of execution approached. Valentine divided his time between preparation for death, interviews with his family and friends, and the composition of an address that he wished to deliver upon the scaffold. This address embodied a great portion of Valentine's life—experiences, as they are already known to the reader. When it was fin-

Digitized by Google

ished in manuscript, it was submitted to the perusal of the attendant clergymen. Some among them warmly approved the address, and declared it to be the most eloquent appeal they had ever met. Others reserved their opinion for the time, and afterward asserted that it was the most powerful sermon that they had ever seen or heard.

The day before the execution came. And now I must inform you that it is to "Sister Dely" I am indebted for the report of the scenes that occurred in her presence in the condemned cell that day. Dely had obtained leave from her mistress, Mrs. Hewitt, to go to the prison, to take leave of her Valentine.

It was about ten o'clock, on Thursday, the 23d of December, when she reached the city. All the town was preparing for Christmas. When she entered the condemned cell, she found no one there except the two prisoners. There were two cot bedsteads at opposite sides of the cell, and one small iron stove against the wall, between the beds, and directly opposite the door by which she entered.

On her right hand, as she came in, sat Governor upon his cot, watching, with lazy interest, the employment of his fellow-prisoner, which in sooth was strange enough for one of his position.

Valentine was standing at the little table, and engaged in ironing out a cravat, while on the cot near him lay spread out a shirt just ironed, a satin vest, newly pressed, and a full suit of black broadcloth, well brushed.

And Dely knew at a glance that the poor fellow, true to his habits of neatness to the last, was preparing to present a proper appearance upon the scaffold.

"Was there no one to do that for you, Valentine?" said Dely, after her first greeting.

"No, child, there was not. Mother and poor Fannie are in too much trouble to think of such a thing."

"I would have done it for you, Valentine."

Digitized by Google

"No matter, child; it is done now," said the young man, laying the folded cravat upon the cot, and then turning around and sitting down by the side of Dely.

"I wish, Delia, that you would try to open the eyes of Governor to the realities of his position. Poor fellow! he is fully persuaded that to-morrow, instead of being executed, we shall be set at liberty."

Delia turned her eyes in wonder toward Governor, who sat upon the side of his cot, smiling and shaking his head in the most incredulous manner. Delia shrank from the task that Valentine would have imposed upon her, and only said—

"We will pray for him, Brother Valentine. Governor, won't you kneel down with us, and pray for yourself?"

Governor said that, as praying could not do anybody any harm, he reckoned he would, to please Dely, though he did not see the use of it.

They all knelt, and this humble handmaid of the Lord, who was peculiarly gifted in prayer, offered up a fervent petition in behalf of the prisoners, and especially of Governor.

They had just arisen from their knees, when the door of the cell was opened, and the jailer entered, accompanied by another official, who nodded to the inmates, and then, beckoning to Valentine, requested him to step forward.

Valentine obeyed, and the man, drawing a measuring-line from his pocket, told him to stand up straight. Valentine drew himself up with as much composure as ever he had shown, when, in his earlier days, he was getting himself fitted for a Sunday suit of clothes. The operator proceeded to measure his subject across the shoulders. And when this was done, he stopped, drew a paper and pencil from his pocket, and, leaning on Valentine's late ironing-table, put down some figures. Then he took the line again, and carefully measured him, from the crown of his head to the heels of his shoes, and made a second note.

Digitized by Google

Then, telling Valentine that he was done with him, he beckoned to Governor, who had been looking on with open-mouthed amazement, and who now came forward, and braced himself up with the utmost alacrity and cheerfulness. Indeed, he was smiling from ear to ear, as he exclaimed, triumphantly—

"Tell you all so! We aint had no winter clothes guv us yet, and dey's done sent de tailor to fit us!"

The operator with the line, on hearing this, dropped his measure, and, with emotions divided between astonishment and compassion, gazed at the poor wretch, who remained smiling in delight. No one else spoke, and, after a moment, the official picked up his line, and resumed his work.

"Wen'll de clothes be ready for we?" inquired Governor, with great interest.

"I am not taking your size for clothes," answered the operator, gravely.

"No! What, den?" inquired Governor, in astonishment, but without the least suspicion of the truth.

"Don't you know?"

"No! I doesn't! What is it?"

"Well, you know, at least, that you are to die to-morrow. And I am measuring you for your coffin."

Governor made no reply, neither did the smile pass at once from his face. He no longer refused to believe in his approaching fate, but the idea was very slow in penetrating his brain.

The carpenter, having now completed his errand, left the cell, in company with the turnkey. Governor went and resumed his seat upon the side of his cot, and remained perfectly silent, only not as cheerful as he had been; and, occasionally, putting up his hand, and rubbing his head, and seeming to ponder. At last he said, dubiously, however—

"Brother Walley, honey, I'se beginnin' to be 'fraid, arter

Digitized by Google

all, dat dey tends for to hang us, sure 'nough! Dey wouldn't carry de nonsense *dis* far, 'out dey did; would dey? 'Sides which, dey wouldn't go to de 'xpense o' coffins, would dey?"

"No, Governor," said Valentine, going over and sitting down beside him, and taking his hand, and continuing—"Governor, by this hour to-morrow, you and I will be over all our earthly troubles."

Slowly, slowly, the truth was making its way to Governor's consciousness. His face clouded over, but he seemed to grow more stupid every instant. To all Valentine's speeches he answered never one word, not seeming to hear or to understand them.

Dely could not bear this. Bursting into tears, she went and dropped upon her knees before Governor, and took his two hands in hers, and wept over them, and begged and prayed him, for his soul's sake, to listen to her words. Governor was only a recent acquaintance; he was not, as Valentine was, an old friend; yet it almost broke her gentle heart to see him thus—so stolid, so unconscious, so insensible.

They were interrupted again—this time by a clergyman, and one other gentleman, a member of the church.

Dely was now obliged to return home. She took an affectionate leave of Valentine and of Governor, telling them that she should pray for them constantly, and that she should be on her knees, praying for them, in their last hour of trial.

The minister found Valentine well prepared to meet his doom. But when he turned his attention to the other condemned man, he found, to his dismay, that he could not make the slightest impression upon Governor. The unhappy creature no longer doubted what his doom would be; but, as I said before, the truth very slowly entered his mind; and, alas! as it entered, it seemed to press him down, and

Digitized by Google

down, into deeper and more hopeless apathy, until, at last, he sat there silent, senseless, crushed. They could not pray *with* him—they could only pray *for* him.

The next day, Christmas eve, dawned brightly for almost all the world—darkly enough for the condemned.

An early hour of the morning had been appointed for the farewell interview between the prisoners and their families. Such partings are always distressing beyond conception, and I shrink from the pain of saying much about them.

Governor had but few friends, his fellow-slaves, who came over very early in the morning to take leave of him, and who, finding him so apathetic, went away comforted, with the belief "that Governor did not seem to mind it."

His miserable wife came alone, to drop weeping at his feet, and implore his dying forgiveness for the part she had had in bringing him to this awful pass.

Governor, partially aroused from his torpor, awoke sufficiently to put his arm around her shoulders, and say—

"Don't cry, chile; I doesn't bear you no malice; *you* couldn't help of it, chile, no more 'an *I* could; things was too much for us bofe. Don't cry, I loves you same as ever."

This gentleness almost broke the penitent woman's heart, and she went away weeping bitterly, wringing her hands, and wishing most sincerely it were possible for her, the most guilty one, to die in her husband's stead. After this visit, Governor sank into a still deeper stupor of despair, from which nothing had power to arouse him.

Directly after this followed the last interview between Valentine and his little family.

Phædra and Fannie came in, accompanied by old Elisha, who carried little Coralie in his arms. I cannot describe the anguish of this parting.

Phædra perhaps bore it best of all, with a strange, hope-

Digitized by Google

less fortitude, that reminded one of Governor's stolidity, only saying, that though life was sorrowful, even at its happiest, it was, thank Heaven! short at its longest; and that she should not be many days behind her son.

But Fannie was wild with sorrow, and utterly inconsolable. When the moment of final separation arrived, she fainted, and was borne from the cell, as one dead, in the arms of the old preacher. Phædra followed, leading little Coralie.

The execution was to be a public one. And the authorities published a card in the daily papers, formally inviting the masters of the city and the surrounding country to give their slaves a holiday upon this day, to enable the latter to attend the execution of Valentine and Governor. And as the morning advanced toward noon, so numerous was the multitude of negroes that gathered in from all parts of the country, and so great was the excitement that prevailed among them, that the powers saw the mistake they had made by issuing this general invitation, and felt great alarm as to the result.

The marshal called upon the militia and the city guards to turn out and muster around the scaffold, to insure the safe custody of the prisoners and the execution of the sentence.

The scaffold was erected upon a gentle elevation, on the west suburb of the city. A crowd of many thousands, each moment augmented, was gathered upon the ground. But the two companies of militia made a way through this forest of human beings, and formed around the foot of the scaffold.

It was about eleven o'clock that the prisoners were placed in a close van, in company with the marshal and a clergyman, and, escorted by a detachment of the city guards, were driven to the place of execution. The presence of the guards was needed to force a passage through the compact

Digitized by Google

and highly excited crowd. The prison van was kept carefully closed, and the condemned with their attendants remained invisible until the procession had passed safely through that stormy sea of human beings, and gained the security of the hollow square formed by the bayonets of the militia around the scaffold.

The van drew up at the foot of the steps leading to the platform. The police officer that stood behind the vehicle jumped down and opened the door, and handed out the prisoners, who were followed closely by the marshal and the clergyman.

The marshal immediately took charge of Governor, to lead him up the stairs.

The clergyman drew Valentine's arm within his own, to follow.

And the police officer was joined by the deputy marshal, who brought up the rear.

And so the sad procession ascended those fatal stairs—Governor in a deep stupor, or looking as if he did not understand what all this pageant meant—Valentine with grave composure, as if he felt the awful solemnity of the moment, and was prepared to meet it. The scaffold was very high, and was reached by a flight of more than twenty steps.

When the prisoners and their escort gained the platform, they stood in full view of every individual of that vast concourse of people. Their appearance was hailed by acclamation from the multitude below, and huzzas of encouragement or defiance, shouts of derision, and cries of sympathy, were mingled in one undistinguishable melee of noise.

The prisoners were not prematurely clad in the habiliments of the grave, as is usual upon such occasions, but were attired in ordinary citizen's dress.

Governor wore his best Sunday suit of "pepper and salt" casinet, and looked a huge, shapeless figure of a

Digitized by Google

negro, in which the sooty skin could scarcely be distinguished from the sooty clothes.

Valentine looked very well, though pale and worn. He wore a suit of black broadcloth, with a white cravat and gloves, and his natural ringlets were arranged with that habitual regard to order and neatness which was with him a second nature.

Valentine held in his hands the manuscript address that he wished to make to the assembly. He had been promised by the authorities an opportunity of delivering this address, before the parting prayers should be said. He stood now with his copy in his hand, only waiting for the noise to subside, before his commencing. Governor stood by his side, in stolid insensibility.

But Valentine had been deceived to the last moment; he was not to be permitted to deliver that address; the authorities feared too much its exciting effect upon the tumultuous assembly below. The marshal had received his instructions, and had given private orders to his deputy and assistants.

Valentine was still letting his eyes rove over the "multitudinous sea" of heads, waiting for a calm in which he might be heard, when his eye fell upon Major Hewitt, who had been absent all day at the capital, and had but just returned from his last fruitless attempt to move the Executive in behalf of the condemned, and who, without leaving his saddle, had ridden up at once to the scene of execution. He could not penetrate the crowd, but remained on horseback on its outskirts. At the same moment, the figure of Major Hewitt caught the eye of Governor, and roused him from the torpor of despair into which he had fallen—roused him to an agony of entreaty, and stretching out his arms to his master, he cried, with a loud voice, that thrilled to the hearts of all present—

"Oh, Marster! I allus looked up to you as if you were

Digitized by Google

my father and my God! Save me now! save me from under the gallows! Oh, Marster!"——

Major Hewitt turned precipitately, and galloped away from the scene.

The condemned were not aware that they stood upon the fatal trap-door. They did not notice, either, that, at a signal from the marshal, the attending clergyman stepped aside, and the deputy and assistants gathered in a little group behind. Governor still had his arms extended in wild entreaty after his flying master, and Valentine was still waiting for silence, when suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, their arms were bound, the cords slipped over their heads, the cap drawn over their eyes, the spring of the bolt touched, and without one instant's warning, or one word of prayer or benediction, they fell, and swung between sky and earth.

"In the name of Heaven! why have you done this thing?" asked the terribly-shocked minister, who was altogether unprepared for the suddenness of the execution.

"In another five minutes an attempt would have been made at rescue," answered that official.

This tragedy spoiled the Christmas festivities of many more than were immediately connected with the sufferers. If the reader cares to follow the sad fortunes of the survivors, I have only to tell them that Phædra outlived her son but one short month; and Mrs. Waring kindly took Fannie and her child away from the scene and associations of their calamity, to her own quiet and beautiful country home in East Feliciana. Major Hewitt is a "sadder," and, let us hope, "a wiser man," since he no longer closes his ears to the complaints of his suffering people.

One word more. The tragic story, in which I have endeavored to interest you, is, in all its essential features,

Digitized by Google

strictly true. Not that I mean to say, that in all the scenes, word followed word precisely in the order here set down, though generally the language used has been faithful to the letter, and *always* to the spirit, of the facts. Valentine and Governor lived, suffered, sinned, and finally together died, for the causes and in the manner related. My means of minute information were very good. The tragedy occurred but a few years ago, in a neighborhood with which I am familiar. It excited at the time great local interest, but never probably got beyond "mere mention" in any but the local papers. In relating it, I have delivered "a round, *unvarnished* tale," and have not colored the truth with any adventitious hue of fancy. The subject was too sacred, in its dark sorrow, for such trifling. Only, for the sake of some survivors, a change of names and a slight change of localities has been deemed proper.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE SPECTRE REVELS.

A

TALE OF ALL HALLOW EVE.

Black spirits and white,
Blue spirits and grey,
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
Ye that mingle may.—*Shakespere.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE SPECTRE REVELS.

A TALE OF ALL HALLOW'S EVE.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear!
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
That said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!—*Thomas Hood.*

"DID I ever see a ghost, friends? Um-m—Well! *ghost* is not the modern name for such an apparition. It is called 'imagination,' 'optical illusion,' fancy, fever, or something else—never 'ghost,' which makes no difference in the nature of the thing, however. 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' Yes! I have—I have gone through more than *seeing* them—I have *known* them!"

"Ghosts!!"

"*No*, I repeat to you the term is obsolete—optical illusions. Though to be sure the ghostly experience that has left the deepest impression upon my mind—and that this anniversary especially recalls, was no optical illusion."

"What! was it a *real* ghost story though? and did it happen to you?"

"You shall hear."

It was the 31st of October, All Hallow's Eve, a ghostly season, as every one properly posted in ghostly lore knows very well. A dreary storm of rain and wind was beating against the windows; but the fire on the old sitting-room hearth was burning warmly, the candles were not yet lighted, our father, the pastor, had not returned from a sick call, and with a delightful show of expectation we all gathered around the fire to hear Aunt Madeleine's ghost story.

Digitized by Google

It is now more years than I care to remember, she began, since we moved from the old forest of St. Mary's, up to the town of W.

Our family then consisted of our grandmother, Mrs. Hawkins, my sister Alice (your mother, dears,) and two old family servants, Hector and his wife Cassandra.

That removal was the first great memorable epoch in my own and my sisters' lives. We had never seen any thing approaching nearer to a town than the little hamlet of St. Inigoes, and though W. was just exactly the drowsiest old city that ever slept through centuries and slept itself to death, yet to us, coming from the forest farm, it seemed a very miracle of life, enterprise and excitement.

We reached our home in Church street just about the last of October.

At first the change was delightful to us. We were never weary of exploring the streets and reading the signs, and—as we gained confidence and ventured into the shops —of examining the marvellous treasures of silks, and satins, and laces and jewelry, and china, and "all that's bought and sold in city marts."

I recall the first six months of our residence in W., while the novelty still lasted and all was beautiful illusion, and think that no mere worldly event can ever give me such true pleasure again.

Ally and I told each other over and over again that "the city was the true Arcadia!" that *there* all poetry, romance and adventure was to be found, and that it was like scenes in the Arabian Nights.

We were never weary of exploring new quarters—even the narrow, squalid lanes, and alleys with their dilapidated houses and ragged denizens, had a grotesque attraction for us—and often we would stand gazing at some wretched tenement, with falling timbers and stuffed windows, and speculate about the life of the people within.

Digitized by Google

And besides the wonders of treasures and pleasures—there was the daily recurring astonishment at the *convenience* of the place.

We could scarcely get used to the idea that when we wanted a skein of silk or a paper of needles, it was only necessary to go across the street, or around the corner to get them, instead of puting the mare to the gig and riding seven miles to the next store; or that when we went out to tea, we had only to walk a square or so, instead of driving from three to ten miles; or that we might stay out until bed time, instead of ordering the horses to start for home at sunset.

And then the comfort of being able to walk out dry shod over the clean pavement, in all weathers, instead of in the winter being obliged to ride in a carriage, plunging axle-tree deep through lanes of mud and water, or worse still, being weather-bound by the state of the roads.

In fact, so charmed were we all with this walking with impunity at unaccustomed times and seasons, that the old carry-all gathered dust in the coach house, and Jenny, the mare, accumulated fat in the stable.

But if the autumn in the city seemed so delightful to us rustics, what shall I say of the winter, when the lecture rooms and concert halls were thrown open, and when evening parties were given? There seemed to us no end of enchantments.

I should have told you that when we first went to town we had but one acquaintance there. It was with the family of our Uncle and Aunt Rackaway. They had a large family of growing sons and daughters, of which our dear cousin Will (your own respected father, girls,) was the eldest, the handsomest, the wildest, and the best beloved. Will Rackaway soon initiated us into all the innocent amusements of the season—took us to evening meetings, lectures, concerts, exhibitions of every sort, except the the-

Digitized by Google

atre, which our grandmother could not be persuaded to regard as an innocent amusement.

We were a social family, and soon collected around us a very agreeable neighborhood circle, some one or two of whom would drop in upon us every evening when we were at home, or else invite us out. Ally and I extended our acquaintance among young people whose parents occasionally gave dancing parties, at which we were always present, and which, therefore, our good grandmother felt bound to sometimes reciprocate. You are not to suppose that our days passed in a round of fashionable dissipation. Nonsense! nothing of the sort. We were rather a staid domestic family—but upon the whole what a contrast this to the long monotonous evenings in the farm house!

Well, so passed that winter, so full of future consequences—that winter in which Alley's gentle spirit first won the heart of her wild cousin Will. All pleasures pall! Before the season was over, the streets, the shops, the shows—all the wonders and glories of the city had lost their attraction with their novelty.

When the spring came, we had grown just a little weary of city life. With April a spring fever for sowing, and planting, and pruning, and training came upon us. But, alas! there was nowhere to sow or plant—our back yard was flagged, and our front one paved. And there was nothing to prune or train—four forlorn trees, trimmed by city authorities into the shape of upright mops, standing upon the hard pavement before our door, were the only apologies for vegetation near us, and they looked as exiled and home-sick as ourselves. Mrs. Hawkins also missed her chickens and turkeys, and we all felt the loss of the cows.

"Ah, if we could only get a house away to ourselves, a house in the suburbs, with ground around it, where we could be private, and have shade trees and a garden, and cows and poultry, and all that, within an easy walk to

Digitized by Google

the city, how happy I should be," said grandmother, sighing.

"Ah, yes! if we only could! then we should enjoy the pleasures of both city and country life," said I.

"'Oh, that would be joyful, joyful, joyful, joyful!'" exclaimed Ally, quoting the chorus of a popular hymn.

"Ah! well, we must keep our eyes open, and see what we can find," said our grandmother.

The street upon which we lived was narrow and closely built up. It led down half a mile to a long bridge that crossed the river. Consequently this street was the great thoroughfare of country people coming into town, to market, or to shop, or upon any other errand.

Among those who came every day was one old man, who was quite an eccentric character, and who is still remembered by the aged inhabitants of W. Doctor H. always wore a cocked hat, a powdered wig, a black velvet coat, double waistcoat, ruffled shirt, knee breeches, long hose and silver buckles, and carried a gold-headed cane, keeping up in his age, the style and costume of his youth.

He came in town every morning in a gig driven by a servant as old and as quaint as himself.

He returned every evening.

The doctor was a never-failing object of interest to us. The little information we could get respecting him only whetted our curiosity to a keener edge. We learned from Cousin Will that he had no family and no society; that he lived alone in a secluded country house, called the Willow Cottage, with no companion except the aged servant seen always with him; that he had a traditional reputation of having possessed great skill in his profession, and that he now followed a limited practice among his old cotemporaries in the city.

So much of authentic facts.

Beside these it was rumored that, years before, he had

Digitized by Google

married a lovely young girl, who had been persuaded or forced to sacrifice her youth and beauty and a prior attachment, to his wealth and age and infirmities; whose short life had been imbittered by his jealousies; and whose sudden death, under suspicious circumstances, had not left him free from imputations of the gravest character.

This was all we could learn of the doctor; and you may depend that our interest in him was deepened and darkened. We watched him with closer attention. His hard, sharp features, his deep set eyes, whitened hair, and thin, bent figure, took on a sinister appearance, or we fancied so.

However that might be, we felt more shocked than grieved when one morning the news came that the doctor was found at daybreak dead in his bed, with dark marks upon his neck as from the pressure of a thumb and finger!

The news spread like wild fire. The long closed doors of the Willow Cottage flew open to the public, and its darkened chambers to the sunlight. Crowds flocked thither; the old servant was examined and discharged, no suspicion attaching to him; the coroner's inquest met, and after a session of twelve hours, rendered its sapient verdict—"Found Dead"—which of course greatly enlightened the public mind. The old servant obtained a home in the almshouse, and the Willow Cottage passed to the next of kin.

These events occurred in the month of May. About the middle of June, the weather became so hot, the streets so dusty, that the city grew intolerable to us. During winter the town of W. had afforded a pleasant contrast to the country; during summer it was quite the opposite. In the height of our discontent, one morning, Will Rackaway came in.

"The Willow Cottage is for rent! Here is a chance for you!"

"The Willow Cottage for rent! Oh, that is delightful," said Ally and I in a breath.

Digitized by Google

"Who has the renting of it?" inquired grandmother.

"Well, the agent is out of town; but I got the key from his clerk, and if you'll order Jenny put to the carry-all, I'll drive you out there to look at it. I think it will be let cheap, for the associations of the place are so gloomy that none but a strong-minded woman like Aunt—"

"A Christian woman you mean, Will."

"Well, yes, a Christian woman like Aunt would venture to live in it."

Mrs. Hawkins had in the meantime put her hand to the bell, summoned Hector, and given him an order to get the carry-all ready for a drive. We were soon in the carriage, and half an hour's drive took us down the street, across the long bridge to the other side of the river, and to the Willow Cottage.

There is, as I have noticed always, a remarkable fitness in the names given to country houses. This was certainly the case with the present one. There was not a willow near the place.

A few yards from the end of the bridge, and to the right hand of the highway, a disused grass-grown road led through a close thicket of evergreens, some quarter of a mile on to an open level area, of about an hundred acres of exhausted land, grown up in broom sedge and completely surrounded by the pine forest.

In the midst of this area stood a red stone cottage, consisting of a central building of two stories, flanked each side by wings of one story in height. The central building was finished by a gable roof front, with a large single fan-shaped window just above the front portico.

The cottage stood in the midst of a garden of about one acre, shaded with many trees and surrounded by a substantial stone wall, parallel to which, on the inside, was a hedge of evergreens, and on the outside another hedge of climbing and intertwining wild rose, eglantine and blackberry vines.

Digitized by Google

An iron gate, very rusty and dilapidated, admitted us to the grass grown walk that led between two rows of black oak trees to the front portico of the central building.

We entered a small front hall behind which was a large square parlor, in the rear of which was a long dining-room. The wings on the right and left consisted each of a bed chamber, entered from the front hall. There was but one room above stairs, a large chamber immediately over the parlor in the central building, and lighted by the fan-light in the front gable.

The kitchen, laundry, and servants' rooms were in another building in the rear of the cottage; they were not joined together, but stood as it were back to back, presenting to each other a dead wall without door or window, and about two feet apart, thus forming a blind alley.

I have been thus particular in describing the house, that you may better understand the story that follows.

"The builder who designed this was certainly demented," said one of the party, pointing to the blind alley with its waste of wall.

Will laughed.

"I have noticed, Madeline, that quite as much of character is shown in the construction of houses as in the cut of physiognomies."

"But upon the whole, I like it," said the other.

And so said every one.

There was a stable, a coach-house, a hen-house, a smoke-house, and in fact every possible accommodation for the household. The fruit trees and vines were teeming with fruit, which also lay ripening or decaying in great quantities upon the ground. The rosebushes had spread the grass with a warmer-hued and sweeter covering.

We filled our old carry-all with fruit and our hands with flowers, and prepared to return home. Ally was in ecstacies. So was cousin Will. So was our grandmother, as

Digitized by Google

much as a self-possessed and dignified matron of the old school could be said to be. As for myself, I could not sleep that night for thinking of our removal to the fine old place. We had unanimously resolved to take it.

Alas! we had reckoned without our landlord. Upon inquiry, of the agent, next day, we learned that the place was already let to a man who intended to make it a house of summer resort, for which its convenient distance from the city, its cool and shady and secluded site, and its extensive grounds, numerous shade trees, and fine fruit, and many other good points, peculiarly adapted it.

We were very much disappointed, but our regret was somewhat modified when we ascertained that it was let at a preposterous rate of rent, that a prudent woman like our grandmother never would have undertaken to pay. So we resigned ourselves to the inevitable.

However, in a week or two we were so fortunate as to rent a small, neat house, on the opposite side of the road from the Willow Cottage, and nearer to the bridge. We immediately moved into our new home; and grandmother sent Hector down into the country to bring up her poultry, and drive up her cows—a business that he took but three days to accomplish.

We were thus settled in our suburban residence, with which, by the way, we were not quite content. It was too small, too exposed to the rays of the sun, the dust of the road and the eyes of the passengers; it was too new also, and the shrubs and flowers had not had time to grow, and then——we had been disappointed of Willow Cottage

In addition to these drawbacks, and even worse than these, was the fact that we were annoyed all day long and every day, by the troops of visitors, on foot and on horseback, in sulkies and buggies, all bound for the Willow Cottage.

And *worst* of all, we were disturbed all night by the noisy passage of these revellers returning home.

Digitized by Google

On Sundays and Sunday nights this was insufferable. It seemed as if ten times as many revellers went out in the day, and came back ten times as much intoxicated and as noisy in the night! Our poor old Cassandra vowed that when we changed the farm for the city house, it was bad enough, but when we changed the city house for the suburban cottage, "we jest *did it*—jumped right out'n de fryin' pan inter de fire!"

However, a terrible event soon occurred at the Willow Cottage, that crowded every thing else out of our heads.

It was the night of the fourth of July. All day long crowd after crowd had passed our house, on their way out there. From early in the morning until late at night, the road was kept clouded with the dust, that settled upon every thing in and around our house. We were glad when, late at night, the revelry seemed to cease, and we were permitted to be at peace.

We retired, and, exhausted by the exciting annoyances of the day, I fell asleep. I know not how long I had slept, when I was suddenly aroused by the noise of many persons hurrying past the house in apparently a state of great excitement. In another moment I perceived that all the family had been aroused as well as myself. They hurried into my room, which was the front chamber of the second floor, and thus from a secure point commanded the street. We all crowded to the two windows, left the candles unlighted that we might not be seen, and remained as mute as mice, that we might not be heard.

The stars were very bright, and we could distinctly see the hurrying crowd in the road below. Some were running in the direction of the Willow Cottage, while others were hastening thence. These opposite parties meeting, would exchange a few vehement words and gestures, and then speed upon their several ways.

At last a man, running against another immediately under the window, inquired—

Digitized by Google

"For Heaven's sake, what is the matter at the Willow Cottage?"

"Don't stop me, for the Lord's sake. O'Donnegan, the landlord, has killed young Keats, the only son of Colonel Keats! I am running to fetch his father!"

"Heavens and earth! another murder within that accursed house! That is the third!" exclaimed the questioner, in a voice of horror.

The men separated in opposite directions: the one running toward the town, the other toward the scene of the outrage. The same questions and the same answers were quietly heard between other meeting parties, who separated, running in opposite ways, as the first had done. The dreadful news was thus confirmed.

We drew back our heads and looked each other in the face, in consternation. We knew none of the parties concerned, yet we could not compose ourselves to sleep that night.

The next day was a terrible one to the friends of the murdered and the murderer.

Once more—the third time—a Coroner's Inquest sat upon a dead body at the Willow Cottage. But this time their verdict, made up after a careful investigation and patient deliberation, was of a more fatal character. It was that—"The deceased came to his death by blows upon the head, from a bludgeon in the hands of Patrick O'Donnegan."

O'Donnegan, who was under arrest, awaiting the verdict, was then fully committed to stand his trial at the approaching session of the criminal court.

The establishment at the Willow Cottage was broken up, the furniture sold, the house closed, and the premises once more advertised for rent. But now with the bad odor hanging around the place, no one wished to take it, and the house remained idle upon the proprietor's hands.

Meantime the trial of O'Donnegan approached. He

Digitized by Google

was arraigned, convicted, and sentenced, in a shorter space of time than I ever heard of in the trial of any criminal. Many people thought that the prosecution was conducted in a vindictive spirit, and that the friends of the deceased exerted every faculty, sparing neither influence nor expense in the pursuit of a conviction. They retained the best counsel in the country to assist the State's Attorney, while on the other hand, the poor wretch of a prisoner had no defense except that appointed for him by the court. However that might be, in the short space of one month from the time of committing the homicide, he was sentenced to die, and in six weeks from his conviction, he expiated his crime upon the scaffold.

It was about the middle of September, of that eventful year, when a rumor arose as all rumors arise—mysteriously—that the Willow Cottage was HAUNTED; that ghostly lights flitted through its chambers; that ghostly revellers held midnight orgies in its deserted halls; and that the murderer and the murdered still played their game at nine pins, or waged their last war along its lonely corridors.

While these reports were rife in the neighborhood, our Grandmother Hawkins turned a deaf ear, or threw in a good-humored, sarcastic word to the marvel-mongers—upon one occasion launching at them and us the time-honored proverb.

"You will never see any thing worse than yourselves, my dears."

"I believe you, Mistress, honey! for long as I lib on dis yeth, and feared as I is o' ghoses, *I* nebber see nothin' worse nor *myse'f* yet—dough, the Lord betune me an' harm, I sartinly saw de debbil once—I did," observed old Cassy, sapiently.

"If no one else takes the Willow Cottage beforehand, just wait until my term is up here, and then if Mr. Buzzard will let it to a small quiet family, on any thing like reason-

Digitized by Google

able terms, you'll see how *we* meet spectres," said our grandmother.

"Too late, Aunt Rachel! The Willow Cottage is let," exclaimed Will Rackaway, who had a few minutes previously joined our party.

"Let, is it? Ah! well, I hope it is not to another rum-seller!"

"No indeed! to another guess tenant! to Colonel Manly, of the —— regiment, who is now ordered to join General Armistead, in Florida, and who takes the cottage as a pleasant country home for his wife and children during his absence."

"Hum-m me! then we shall have neighbors. I am very well reconciled," said Mrs. Hawkins.

A few weeks after this conversation, the new tenants were settled in the Willow Cottage, and the Colonel embarked for Florida.

Grandmother Hawkins was rather slow and ceremonious in all her dealings with society. Therefore she "took her time" in calling upon Mrs. Manly. Consequently, upon the very morinng that she set out to pay that lady a visit, she met a train of furniture drays proceeding from the premises, and heard to her great astonishment that the family were moving away.

"And they have been only here a week!" exclaimed the old lady, by unmitigated astonishment thrown for a moment off her guard.

Significant looks and mysterious gestures were the only comments made by the servants upon the subject.

And Mrs. Hawkins, thinking it improper to push inquiries in that quarter, sent in her respects and good wishes to Mrs. Manly, and then, without having alighted from her carry-all, gave the order to turn the horse's head homeward.

You may judge the surprise with which we heard the

Digitized by Google

news of this flitting; but as our grandmother had asked no questions, she could give us no information.

Others however were not so discreet; inquiries were made and answered, and soon the news flew all over the country, that Mrs. Manly, upon account of the mysterious noises that nightly disturbed her rest, found it impossible to live in the house.

The Cottage remained idle for some weeks, and then was taken by another family, who staid ten days, then vanished —whispering the same cause for their abandonment of the premises.

The excitement of the neighborhood increased. There was nothing talked of but the haunted house. Large parties visited the spot during daylight, who, after the most curious investigation, found nothing unusual about the looks of the place. But no tenant could be induced to take it, and it remained idle for several weeks, at the end of which time, a family from down the country moved up, and reading of this fine place to let, and not knowing its "haunted" reputation, engaged it at once. The name of the newcomers was Ferguson. The neighborhood waited the event in deep interest.

Upon the day after their settlement at the Cottage, as we were just about to sit down to our very early breakfast, there was a knock at the door, followed by the entrance of a good-looking, motherly, colored woman, who announced herself as "Aunt Hannah, ole Marse Josh Farguson's 'oman," and stood waiting.

"Well, Hannah, you look tired—sit down on that stool and let us know how we can do you good," said Mrs. Hawkins.

"Thanky, Mist'ess—no time to sit, honey, 'deed I hasn't —I come to see if you would 'form me where I could buy a little drap o' cream, for ole Marse' coffee. Our cows hasn't 'riv' from below yet."

Digitized by Google

"You cannot buy cream at all in this neighborhood, but I will supply your master, with great pleasure, until his cows come home."

"Thanky, Mist'ess! thanky honey! I 'cepts of it wid all de comfort in life! An if so be you-dem wants any plums, or pears, or squinches, for 'serves, we'd 'sply you in like manner."

After this Aunt Hannah came every morning for her pitcher of cream. One morning I overheard her talking with Cassy in the kitchen.

"How you dew likes your new place?" inquired Cassy.

"*Hush honey!*" exclaimed the other, with an air of deep mystery.

"Lord! 'deed now?" whispered Cassy.

"Trufe I'm telling you!" replied Hannah.

"Do any one sturve you o' nights?"

"*Hush honey!*"

"Who?"

"*Dead people.*"

"The Lord betune us and harm!"

"Hush honey! Don't let on! We's gwine 'way; but de family don't want it should be known as dey leave for *sich* a cause."

"I unnerstans! The saints betune us an sin!"

A few days after this conversation Mr. Ferguson's family left the Willow Cottage; and the excitement of the neighborhood upon the subject of the haunted homestead, received a tremendous impetus. As it had been once visited from motives of incredulous curiosity, it was now avoided in the spirit of superstitious dread. It was believed to be unlucky to the visitor. All the worst rumors about the former proprietors were revived and credited. It was said that a curse rested upon the house where marriage faith and friendship's trust and hospitality's laws had each in succession been basely betrayed—upon the house of three reputed murders!

Digitized by Google

Only Mrs. Hawkins stoutly stood up for the defense of the Willow Cottage.

"Three murders! nonsense! three stage plays! The doctor's young wife fretted herself into illness, and died of heart disease, poor thing. She was not therefore murdered. The old doctor himself lived to a good age and died in a fit. Was *he* murdered? I guess the coroner's jury knew! The unhappy young man Keats lost his life in a sinful revel—a warning to all youth. What guilt then rests upon the comfortable home and beautiful garden? Did *they* suggest wine bibbing and brawling? Pshaw! I am ashamed of people's want of logic. Only wait until my term is up here, and then see if I do not move into the house, and *stay* in it too!"

This decision of Mrs. Hawkins produced different effects upon each of her family. I for my own part had a natural turn for melo-dramatic heroism;—admired Joan of Arc, Margaret of Norway, Philippa of Hainalt, and all the lion-hearted, eagle-eyed, battle-axe heroines; and wished for the opportunity of imitating them. I had an aspiring, courageous spirit, but weak nerves; and so I stoutly seconded the move *to* move, though my heart quailed at the idea of our living alone in the haunted house.

Ally's trust in her grandmother was so perfect that she resigned herself in confidence to her decision.

The old negroes were possessed with the direst forebodings, but feeling that it would be vain to remonstrate, only shook their heads and muttered something to the effect that "old mist'ess" confidence in herself would be sure to have a check some day.

Mrs. Hawkins was as good as her word. She began in her steady energetic way, to tie up parcels and pack boxes of such things as were not in daily use, in anticipation of moving. There was no competition for the possession of the deserted mansion. Mrs. Hawkins engaged it at a very moderate rate of rent.

Digitized by Google

And upon the 31st of October—the ghostly anniversary of Hallow Eve—a day ever to be remembered, we began our removal to the haunted house.

It was a dark overcast day.

Mrs. Hawkins, who seldom stopped for weather, was only anxious so get all her effects safely housed before the rain, or at least before night. So very early in the morning, accompanied by Alice, and attended by old Hector, she drove over to Willow Cottage to have fires lighted in the damp house, and to receive and dispose of the furniture as it should arrive.

Myself and Will Rackaway, who came to help me and old Cassy, remained in charge of the house to dispatch the furniture. It was a hard day's work, I assure you. And as the twilight hours passed the sky grew darker, and the air damper and colder. A gloomier and more depressing day could scarcely be imagined.

It was nearly night, when at length we dispatched the last cartload of effects, locked up the house, and got into the old carry-all that had returned for us. Old Cassy sat with me on the back seat, and old Hector, who drove for us, sat beside Will Rackaway, in front. The rain was now falling in a fine, slow drizzle. Perhaps it was the dark and heavy atmosphere, fatigue, and the approach of night, that so oppressed my spirits, but I well remember the feeling of gloom and terror with which I crossed the highway, and entered upon the grass-grown and shadowy road, through the thicket that led to Willow Cottage. It was a very dark and silent scene—no sight but the trees, that like lower and heavier clouds, met and hung over our heads—no sound but the stealthy, muffled turn of the wheels over the wet and fallen leaves.

"The road to the haunted house is a very ghostly one! I think, for my part, Mark Tapley would have found this a fine place to get jolly in," said Will, twisting his head around to look at me.

Digitized by Google

But he had quickly to recall his attention, for his first words had so upset the equanimity of our driver, that he had allowed his horse to run full tilt itno the trees. Will seized the reins from the shaking hands of old Hector, and soon righted the carry-all.

At last we emerged from the thicket, and saw dimly the great open area girdled with its pine forest, of which I have already spoken.

Only like a denser group of shadow, was the old Willow Cottage in the midst of its ancient trees, in the centre of that open space.

We followed the road through the broom sedge across the field, until we drew up at the rusty iron gate of the cottage.

There we alighted, and leaving old Hector to drive the carry-all around to the stable door, we entered and went up the long grass-grown walk between the black oaks, until we reached the house.

The doors and window-blinds were all closed, and the faint light within gleamed fitfully through the chinks where the frame work was warped.

The front door was not locked, and we entered at once into the hall that ran *parallel* with the front of the house, and formed in fact a sort of ante-room to the large parlor that lay behind it. From this hall, besides the central door before us that led into the parlor, there was a door on the right hand and on the left, leading into the side bed chambers in the wings; and by the side of the right-hand door, nearer the front wall, was the staircase leading up to the large chamber in the gable end, that was lighted and ventilated by that fan-shaped window seen in the front of the house, over the portico.

We passed through the hall, and through the large empty parlor behind it, and entered the long dining-room in the rear.

Digitized by Google

There we found Mrs. Hawkins and Alice awaiting us among the piled-up furniture.

"You look tired and out of spirits, Madeleine. You must have worked harder than we did."

"How have you got on?" I inquired.

"Why, we have arranged the bed-chambers and the kitchen—that is all. We have left the dining-room and parlor and hall to be put to rights to-morrow. But Hector has got the supper ready, and set the table in the kitchen; let us go in there; it is warmer; come, girls——come, Will."

As I before mentioned, the kitchen, pantry, laundry, and servants' rooms, were in a building behind the dwelling-house, not joined to it, but standing back to back with it at a distance of three feet. So we had to go out of doors to enter the kitchen.

I remember even now the sense of comfort I experienced on entering that cozy room; it was a stone room, with a great fire-place, in which blazed a fine fire, a wide, high dresser, upon which shone, tier upon tier, rows of bright metal and clean crockery ware; in the middle of the floor was an inviting table, upon which smoked an abundant supper.

"Ah!" said Will, with an appreciating glance at the board, "thus fortified, we can meet the enemy!"

"Can you spend the night with us, Will?" inquired Mrs. Hawkins.

"Oh, no! must return; mother doesn't know I'm out!" replied the youth.

Accordingly after supper Will prepared to take his leave of us.

"Before you go, Will, I wish you to take Hector and the lantern and go over every foot of the grounds, and all along the walks, to see that every thing is safe here," said our grandmother.

Digitized by Google

"Of course, of course, noble lady! order the seneschal and the luminary, and I will reconnoitre the state of the fortifications!" said Will, as he buttoned up his coat.

By the time he had drawn on his gloves, Hector appeared at the door with the lantern, and they sallied forth. I looked through an end window, and found strange amusement in watching the progress of that lantern up one shadowy walk and down another, and along the hedged wall, until at last it approached the house. Will entered, speaking gayly.

"Well, Lady Hawkins, I have reconnoitred the defenses, and found them in an excellent condition! The wall is *strong*, the hedge on the inside is *high*, and that upon the outerside *sharp*. The enemy could not attempt to scale without such damage to cuticle from the one, and bone from the others, as no enemy endowed with "the better part of valor" would risk. All is quiet within the garrison; and if you will send the warden to lock the gate after me, I think the castle will be impregnable for the night."

Hector once more received orders to attend the young master, who now bade us good-night and left the house.

Meanwhile, Cassy had washed up the supper service and restored the kitchen to order. So that when old Hector returned from his errand, bearing the key of the gate, nothing remained for us to do but examine and close the house, offer up our evening worship, and go to bed, which, as it was very late, and we were very tired, we prepared to do at once. After every room was visited, and every door and window firmly secured, we went to the dining-room, for family-prayer, and then let Cassy and Hector out, and gave them the key to lock the door on the outside, so that they might be able to let themselves *in*, in the morning, to light the fires without disturbing us. After having thus dismissed them, closed the door, and heard it locked, we turned to seek our rest.

Digitized by Google

I do not consider these lower bed-rooms quite dry and safe just at present, girls; so I have had two beds made up in the room over head, which is large and well ventilated. Alice can sleep with me in the large bed, and you, Madeleine, can occupy the other," said our grandmother, as she led the way up stairs.

I did not quite like the arrangement, but could not resist Mrs. Hawkins.

The upper room, notwithstanding the fact of its being in the roof, was amply high, and large enough for a healthful double-bedded chamber. Our beds stood parallel, but sufficiently far apart, with their heads against the north, or back wall, and their feet toward the front gable, lighted by the fan-shaped window aforesaid. As it was very damp and chill, and we were very much exhausted, we did not linger long over our final preparations, but went speedily to bed.

Our grandmother and Alice seemed scarcely to have settled themselves under their blankets, and given me a drowsy good-night, when they slid off into the land of dreams.

I could not sleep! I seldom can the first night in a strange house, and this was—*such a house!* I felt quite alone—as much alone as if the heavy sleepers in the next bed were a thousand miles away, for *farther still* in spirit were they. I thought of the isolated situation of the house we were in; of the crimes, real or reputed, that had stained its hearth-stone; of the superstitious terror attaching to the haunted place; of the hard facts that three several families, not reputed less wise or brave than their neighbors, had been driven from the spot by supernatural disturbance as yet unexplained; of the coincidence that this dreary night was the ghostly Hallow Eve; then of the superstition that spirits, when they wish to appear to only one in a room, have the power of casting all others into a

Digitized by Google

profound sleep, from which the haunted one cannot awake them; and of isolating their victim from all the natural world—even from the very bed-fellow by their side. The room was very dark and still—solid blackness and dead silence. It oppressed me like a nightmare. At last, when my senses grew accustomed to the scenes by straining my eyes, I could dimly perceive beyond the foot of my bed, the segment of a circle formed by the fan-light window, that now only seemed a thinner darkness; and by straining my ears, I could faintly hear the stealthy fall of the drizzling rain. It was almost worse than the first total silence and darkness; for it kept my nerves on a strange *qui vive* of attention. Presently this was over too. The muffled sound of the drizzling rain ceased Yet darker clouds must have lowered over the earth, for the faint outline of the fan-light window was no longer visible. All was once more black darkness and intense silence, and again I felt oppressed almost to suffocation—welcome now would have been the faint fall of the fine rain, or the dim outline of the window. I strained my senses in vain, no sight or sound responded. I felt the silence and the darkness settling like the clods of the ground upon my breast.

Hoo-oo-o!—went something.

Hark! what was that? I thought, starting.

Hoo-oo-o-o—!

Oh! the wailing voice of some low, wandering wind, I concluded.

Whir-irr-rr-r-r—!

Yes! the wind is rising, but how like a lost spirit it wails.

Urr-rr-rr-r-r-r—!

My Lord! it's not the wind! What is it? Great Heavens!

Urr-rr-rr-rr-r-r-r-r!

I started up in a sitting posture, and bathed in a cold

Digitized by Google

perspiration, remained listening, my hair bristling with terror.

Urr-rr-rr-rr-r-r-r-r—"Ha—ha—ha!"

I could bear no more!—springing out, I called—

"Grandmother! Grandmother!"

"What's the matter? Why, what ails the child?" exclaimed Mrs. Hawkins.

"Oh! listen! listen!"

"Listen at *what*?—you are dreaming!"

"Dreaming, am I? Oh! wait! Listen—"

Urr-rr-rr-r-r-r-r—"Ha!—ha!—ha!"

It was, as plainly as I ever heard, the sound of the rolling of a ball, followed by a peal of demoniac laughter.

I turned on Mrs. Hawkins an appalled look.

She was surprised but self-possessed, and evidently bent on calmly listening and investigating. She sat straight up in bed with a strong, concentrated attention to the sounds. They came again—

Urr-rr-rr-r-r-r-r-e—rattle-te-bang!—"A ten strike at last!—O's a dead shot!"

"*A dead shot.*"

"*A dead shot,*" was echoed all around.

Grandmother calmly threw the quilts off her, stepped out of bed, and began to dress herself.

"Strike a light, Madeleine," she said.

"What are you going to do, grandmother?"

"Dress myself and examine the premises."

Urr-rr-rr-r-r-r-r—"Ha! ha! ha!" sounded once more the demoniac noise and laughter.

The match box nearly dropped from my shaking hands, but I struck the light.

The sudden flash awoke Alice just as another sonorous roll of the ball, and fall of the pins, and peal of demon laughter, sounded hollowly around us.

"Heaven and earth! what is that?" she exclaimed, starting up.

Digitized by Google

"What do you think it is, Alice?" said I.

"My Lord! my Lord!—it is the phantoms of the murderer and the murdered playing over again their last game!" cried the girl in an agony of terror.

Just at this moment a distinct knocking was heard at the little door at the foot of the staircase.

Alice screamed.

I held my breath.

The knocking was repeated.

"Who is there?" said Mrs. Hawkins, going to the head of the stairs.

No answer; but the knocking was repeated; and then a frightened, plaintive voice, crying—

"Ole Mistess—ole Mistess—oh! do for the Lord sake let me in, chile! the hair's almos' turn gray on my head."

"Is that you, Cassy?"

"Yes, honey—yes, what the ghoses has left o' me," replied the poor creature, in a dying voice.

Grandmother went down the stairs and opened the door at the foot, and Cassy came tumbling up into the room after her. She was absolutely ashen grey with terror, and her limbs shook so that she could scarcely stand.

"Oh! did you hear—did you hear all the ghoses and devils playing ninepins together in our very house?" she gasped, dropping into a chair.

As if in answer to her question, once more the phantom ball rolled in detonating thunder, the pins fell with a loud, rattling sound, followed by a hollow shout of triumph!

Cassy fell on her knees and crossed herself devoutly.

Alice clung in terror to her grandmother.

I felt that the time to play the heroine was come, and strove to exhibit self-possession and courage.

"Take up the candle, Cassy, and lead the way down stairs. We must go and search the house," said Mrs. Hawkins.

Digitized by Google

"Oh! for the Lord's sake don't! don't, ole Mistess, honey! Don't be a temptin' o' Providence! Leave the ghoses alone and stay here, and fasten the door."

"I shall search the house and grounds," said Mrs. Hawkins, in a peremptory voice. "Therefore, take up the light and go before me."

"Oh! for de Lord's love, ole Mistess! ef we *mus'* go, *you* go first, you go first; I dar'n't; I's such a sinner, *I* is!" cried Cassy, wringing her hands in an agony of terror.

Urr-rrr-rr-r-r-r-rattle-te-bang-ang!

"*A ten strike! Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!*" again sounded the revels.

"Hooley St. Bridget, pray for us! Hail Mary, full of grace! Don't go, ole Mistess, honey! Oh stay where you is in safety!" pleaded the old woman, clasping her hands.

"Nonsense! Hold your tongue, Cassy. If ever there was a woman plagued with a set of cowardly simpletons, it is myself. Let go my skirts this moment, Alice! Be silent, every one of you, and follow me as softly as possible," said my grandmother, in a low, stern voice, as she took up the candle and led the way down stairs. We followed at this order—Cassy holding on to her mistress' skirts, Alice holding to Cassy's, and I bringing up the rear, with carnal weapons in one hand and spiritual ones in the other—that is to say, with a big ruler and a prayer-book.

A chill, damp air met us at the foot of the stairs—nothing else.

The front hall was empty and bleak. We tried the doors, and found them as secure as we had left them, with the exception of the parlor door, by which Cassy had entered, and which was on the latch. Mrs. Hawkins pulled it to and locked it, saying, in a low voice, that she wished, while examining each room, to keep all the rest locked, that there might be no escape for any one concealed in the house.

First we went into the right-hand bedroom, opening from

Digitized by Google

the hall. It was secure, vacant and bleak. We locked the door and drew out the key.

Next we looked into the left-hand bedroom: it was in precisely the same condition. We made it fast in the same manner.

Then we opened and entered the parlor. This was the bleakest room of any: large, square, lofty, totally bare, cold and damp.

"Nothing here," said Mrs. Hawkins, looking around.

Urr-rr-rr-r-r-r-r-rattle-te-bang-ang-ang! the phantom ball rolled, and scattered the nine-pins.

"*Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!*" shouted the hollow, ghostly voices.

They seemed to be in the very room with us, reverberating in the very air we breathed, echoiug from the four walls around, and from the ceiling above us!

"Jesu Mary!" cried Cassy, dropping on her knees.

"Oh! oh! oh!" gasped Alice, clinging to me.

"This is very unaccountable," said our grandmother, looking all around the room, where nothing but bare walls and bare boards met the view.

We looked at each other in silence for a few moments, and then Mrs. Hawkins said,—

"Come! let us look into the dining-room, and then call up Hector to assist us in searching the grounds."

We passed on into the next room, and locked the door behind us, as we had locked every one in our tour through the house. That room was closely packed with furniture, over which we had to clamber our passage.

While we were doing so, once again sounded the detonating roll of the ball, the rattling scattering of the pins, and the hollow peals of laughter, all echoing around and around us, as it were, in the same rooms.

Alice again seized her grandmother.

Cassy fell over a stack of wash-tubs, and called on all the saints to help her.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Hawkins ordered Alice to let her go, and Cassy to get up, and me to move on.

She was obeyed. A great general was our grandmother, and we all knew it!

We left the dining-room, locking the last door behind us. We dodged the dark, blind alley, sheltered the candle from the drizzling mist, and went around into the kitchen and called Hector from above.

The old man answered, and soon came toddling down the narrow stairs.

"Hector, have you heard those noises?" inquired Mrs. Hawkins.

"The Lord between us and evil! I've heern, mistess! I've heern!"

"What do you suppose it is?"

A dubious, solemn shake of the head was the old man's only reply.

"Can't you speak, Hector? How do you account for these noises? Come! no mysteries; answer if you can; what are they?"

"*Dead people!*" groaned the old man, with a shudder.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Mrs. Hawkins.

But I could see that even *she* was paler than usual.

"Come, Hector! There is no one in the house, that is certain. And no one can get into it while we are gone, because it is locked up. Now, fasten up the kitchen, and let us go and search the grounds, and unkennel any interlopers that may be lurking there."

We came out and secured the kitchen door, and began our tour of the garden.

As we left the door, our watch-dog ran out to join us.

This circumstance, while it greatly assisted us in our search, very much increased the perplexity of our minds. Had the dog heard the noises that had disturbed us, and if so, why had he not given the alarm?—or, on the other

Digitized by Google

hand, were dogs insensible to supernatural sights and sounds? We could not tell; but we were glad to have Fidelle snuffing and trotting along before us, confident that if there were a human being lurking anywhere in the garden, he would smell him out. So we went up one grass-grown walk and down another, between rows of gooseberry bushes, currant bushes, and rasbperry bushes, all damp and dripping with mist, and through alleys of dwarf plum trees, and all along the hedges of evergreen inside the brick wall, and past the iron gate, which was still chained, as it had been left, and then around in the stable, coach-house, hen-house, and smoke-house, each of which we found securely locked, and, when opened, damp, musty and vacant; and so we looked over every foot of the ground, and into every out-building, finding all safe and leaving all safe; and at last, without having discovered any thing, we arrived again at the dining-room door.

We all entered, locked the door after us, clambered over the piles of furniture, and passed on into the parlor.

The parlor, as I have said, was as yet unfurnished, damp and cold. Yet there we paused for a little while to take breath.

"There is nothing concealed in the garden, and nothing in the house; that is demonstrated. These strange manifestations must admit of a natural explanation; but I confess myself at a loss to explain them," said Mrs. Hawkins.

"Oh! ole Mistess; 'fess it's de ghoses, honey! 'fess it's de ghoses! Memorize how nobody was ever able to lib in dis cussed house!" pleaded Cassy.

"Oh, yes, grandmother, do let's sit up here all night to-night, and move out early to-morrow morning," entreated Ally.

"What do you say, Madeleine?" inquired my grandmother.

"I say, brave it out!"

Digitized by Google

"So do I, my girl!" replied Mrs. Hawkins.

"Oh, for de love o' de Lord *don't*, ole Mistess! don't, Miss Maddy! don't! It's a temptin o' Providence! leave de 'fernal ole place to de ghoses, as has de bes' right to it!" prayed Cassy.

"We'll see that!" said our grandmother. "But come! all seems quiet now; we will go to bed, and investigate further to-morrow."

"Yes, ole Mistess, honey, I knows all is quiet jest *now*, but——"

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!—Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! burst a peal of demoniac laughter, resounding through and through the room, and close into our ears.

"The Lord between us and Satan!" cried Cassy, dropping the candle, which immediately went out and left us in darkness.

While, peal on peal, sounded the demoniac laughter around us.

Cassy fell on her knees and began praying—

"St. Mary pray for us! St. Martha pray for us! all ye hooly vargins and widders pray for us lone women! St. Peter pray for us! St. Powl pray for us! All hooly 'postles and 'vangellers pray for us poor sinners!—Saint—Saint—Saint—Oh! for de Lor's sake, Miss Ally, honey, tell me de name o' that hooly Saint *as met a ghose riding on Balaam's ass* and knows hows how it feels!"

"It was Saul or Samuel, or the Witch of Endor, I forget which," said Alice, whose knowledge of the Old Testament, never very precise, was frightened out of her.

"St. Saul, St. Samuel, St. Witchywinder pray for us, as met a ghost yourself and knows how it feels."

And still while Cassy prayed her frantic prayers, and poor old Hector told his beads, and Alice trembled and clung to me, the demon laughter resounded around and around

Digitized by Google

us. We were in such total darkness that I had not seen Mrs. Hawkins withdraw herself from the group, nor suspected her absence until we heard her firm, cheery voice outside near the dining-room door, saying,

"What can any one think of this? Come here, Hector! Come here, children!"

We all went—expecting some denouement.

Mrs. Hawkins telegraphed to us to be perfectly silent, and to step lightly. She turned the angle of the house and walked up the blind alley between the back of the house and the back of the kitchen; when she had got about midway of the walk, she stopped, and silently pointed to the rank weeds and bushes that grew closely under the wall of the house.

"There! what do you think of that?" she said in a low voice.

We looked, and at first could see nothing; but, on a closer inspection, we perceived a very faint glimmer, a mere thread of red light, low down among the bushes.

We looked up at Mrs. Hawkins for explanation.

"After the candle fell and went out," she said, "I slipped out, with the intention of exploring again, and this time alone, and in darkness. I came up this blind alley, and looking sharply, descried that glimmer of light. And now I am convinced that the revellers, human or ghostly, are below there, in that old disused cellar that we were made to believe was nearly full of water, and required to be drained. Don't be agitated, children! take it coolly," concluded Mrs. Hawkins, stooping down to put aside the weeds and bushes.

Just at this moment another detonating roll of the ball, and scattering fall of the pins, and peal of hollow laughter, resounded from below.

Urr-rr-rr-r-r-r-rattle bang-ang-ang! "Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho! ho! ho! A dead shot!"

"Too late, young gentlemen! Your fun is all over!

Digitized by Google

Your game is up! You are discovered! Come forth!" said Mrs. Hawkins, who, down upon her knees, pulled away the bushes, turned up the old broken and mouldy cellar door, and discovered the scene below.

A rudely fitted up bowling alley, occupying the further end of the room, and some eight or ten youths, no longer engaged in rolling balls, but on the contrary, standing in various attitudes of detected culpability.

"Come! come forth!" commanded Mrs. Hawkins.

And they came, climbing up the rotten and mouldering steps, and the very first who put his impudent head up through the door into the open air was Will Rackaway!

"*Oh!* Will," exclaimed Alice, reproachfully.

"*You!* Will!" questioned Mrs. Hawkins, in scandalized astonishment.

"No! the ghost of O'Donnegan," replied the youth in a sepulchral voice.

"Reprobate!" exclaimed our grandmother.

"Now, indeed, indeed, I was only taking the liberty of entertaining my friends in my kind Aunt Hawkins' cellar. Quite right, you know! Only don't tell father, and I'll never do so no more!" pleaded Will, with mock humility.

"Dismiss your comrades, sir! and come into the house! I shall send for your father to-morrow morning," said Mrs. Hawkins in a stern voice.

There was no need to dismiss the intruders; they were climbing up the dilapidated steps as fast as they could come, and slinking away with averted heads, trying to conceal their faces, which Mrs. Hawkins did not insist upon discovering. When they were all gone, Will followed us into the house.

"Now then, sir, explain your conduct," ordered Mrs. Hawkins.

And Will with an air of mock humility and deprecation obeyed.

Digitized by Google

The account he gave was briefly this—himself and several other youths, sons of very strict parents, who proscribed nine-pins with other games, had, out of some old timber and furniture, left of O'Donnegan's old nine-pin alley, that had been taken down and carried away, fitted up the old disused cellar for their games. They had played there recently, every night, with no other intention than that of amusing themselves, and of keeping their game concealed —with certainly no thought of enacting a ghostly drama; until to their astonishment they gradually learned that these revels were mistaken for ghostly orgies, and had given the house its unenviable reputation of being haunted —a joke much too good for human nature, and especially for *boys'* human nature not to carry out. Every thing favored their concealment. The cellar was reputed to be half full of water, and was long disused, and every cellar-window, except the narrow hidden one that they had turned into a door, was nailed up. Besides, the *front* division of of the cellar was really two feet deep in water, and when there was any great risk of discovery, they had a means of letting it in to overflow the back division, so that their fixtures were all covered. Thus for months they had played the double game of nine-pins and of a ghostly drama!

Need I say more? Will was let off with a lengthy lecture, which I have reason to believe did him a vast deal of good, as he is now the staid father of a family, and pastor of a church. Mrs. Hawkins was for the next nine days the wonder of the neighborhood for having so valiantly exorcised the ghosts. And we settled down in perfect content in the fine old house, to which we possessed the double right of rental and of conquest.

Digitized by Google

THE WIDOW'S SON.

The patient soul,—the lowly mind,
Shall have a large reward;
Let saints in sorrow lie resigned,
And trust a faithful Lord.—*Watts.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WIDOW'S SON.

Ye fearful souls fresh courage take;
The cloud ye so much dread
Is big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.
Watts.

"Oh, dear! what has become of my purse? Where did I leave it? I am sure I had it when I left Dr. Baldwin's," exclaimed Mrs. Sherbourne in trepidation, as she hurriedly searched her pocket, her caba, and her muff, without finding the lost treasure. She had just returned from making a morning call.

"Where have you been?" inquired her sister Mary.

"Oh! nowhere at all, but to Dr. Baldwin's. Oh! dear me! where could I have dropped my purse?" she repeated, in much distress, renewing her search.

"Was there much in it?" inquired Mary in alarm.

"Only sixteen dollars; but the purse, oh! the purse. I would not have lost it for double the amount of money it contained."

"Was it so valuable, then, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Martin, an old lady who was making a morning visit.

"Oh! dear me, yes, Mrs. Martin, it was *in*valuable to me. I loved that purse as if it had been alive."

"Oh! was it that most elegant green and gold one I have seen you with—the most beautiful purse I ever saw in my life."

"Oh, yes, that was the one, and I liked it for its rare

Digitized by Google

beauty; but I loved it because it was the work of my dear *dear* Nelly Moreland, who knit it for me before she went to California with her husband. I would not have taken its weight in precious stones for it. Oh! my poor dear purse," said the lady, with the tears springing into her eyes.

"Are you very sure that you did not leave it at Dr. Baldwin's," asked Mary.

"Absolutely certain. I always carry it hanging across my glove, because I love to look at it—it is such a beauty, and then it was dear Nelly's work. And I remember, now, perfectly, admiring its effect hanging over my drab glove as I came down Seventh street. And that is the last that I remember of it. Oh dear! I would give any thing I possess only to see it once more; how could I have been so careless with my beauty of a purse?"

"Well, my dear, you will have to advertise for it, that is all," said Mrs. Martin.

"Oh, of course, I do intend to advertise it, but, dear me, I have very little hope. People scarcely ever get back their lost things that way, or any other way, except accidentally."

"Providentially," said the old lady.

"Well, providentially, then, but at any rate I will advertise, as it is the only chance."

And so, without stopping to rest, the lady tied her bonnet strings, drew her shawl around her, and went down to the office of the Intelligencer to have the advertisement of the lost purse put in. Then she returned home and awaited the result. But day after day after passed until a month had gone by without any intelligence of a purse found. At length the lady took the advertisement out of the paper and gave up all hopes of its recovery.

About this time there was a very poor widow with two

Digitized by Google

children, a boy of twelve and a girl of eight. The name of her son was Charley and that of her daughter was Bessie. They lived in an old broken down house on Seventh street. The poor widow tried to support herself and children by sewing; but needlework is very tedious, and seamstresses are never half paid for their labor, and little as their pay is, they often have to wait for it, even when they are in great need. And so you may be sure that Mrs. Norton was frequently in great distress for the common necessaries of life. Thus it was with her now. The winter was excessively cold; wood was eight dollars a cord, flour was twelve dollars a barrel, meat and vegetables were at famine prices. Even the rich felt the pressure and complained heavily. How much more, then, must the poor have felt it? And how much must this destitute widow and her children have suffered? Work was very scarce, pay was very low, and was long in coming. The poor widow and her children grew thin and pale, and weak from cold and hunger.

On this Saturday, in particular, the day was piercingly cold. The snow was two feet deep on the ground. The widow was sitting at work in her room, without a spark of fire on the hearth or a mouthful of food in the cupboard. She often had to stop and blow and clap her hands to keep them from freezing, while they were so numb that she could scarcely sew the buttons on the shirt that she was finishing.

Little Bessie was ill in the bed, and Charlie was standing watching his mother with tears in his eyes, and waiting to take that work home. His clothes were very old, and patched all over, but they were scrupulously clean. His shoes were so worn out and broken that his toes came through. Poor Charlie was ill-protected against the piercing cold and deep snow that he would have to brave. And he so thin and pale, too.

Digitized by Google

"What's the matter, Charley?" inquired his mother, when she saw the tears running down his cheeks.

"Oh, mother, I can't help crying to see you work so hard, and see little Bessie so ill, and think how I can't get any thing to do to help either of you."

"It is of no use to cry, Charlie. We must bear suffering and do the best we can, and trust in the Lord to send us better times. Here, now, take this work and run home with it to Mr. Taylor. Ask him to pay you the four shillings he owes us, and then, when you get it, run around to the lumber yard, and ask Mr. Wood please to be so accommodating as to sell us a wheelbarrow of pine, as we cannot spare the change to get a larger quantity. Then go to Mr. Baker's, and get a shilling's worth of corn meal, and a sixpence worth of salt herring, and a half a pound of rice to make a pudding for little Bessie. And make haste home, my boy, for you, too, need food and warmth," said the widow, as she finished rolling up the bundle and gave it to her son.

Charley took it, and ran as fast as he could to Mr. Taylor's clothing store, and asked for the master.

Mr. Taylor came forward.

"Here is the work finished, sir. Mother says she hopes you'll like it."

Mr. Taylor unrolled the parcel, looked at it, and said—

"Humph! it will do;" and threw it to one of the shop boys to put away.

"Mother says will you please to let her have the money, sir, as she has nothing in the house?"

"No, I never pay my work people until their wages run up to five dollars. I cannot be bothered with small accounts. Your mother ought to have known that."

"But she *didn't*, sir; this is the *first* work she ever did for you, and you never told her."

"And it shall be the *last* work she will ever do for me,

Digitized by Google

if I am to be badgered this way," said the merchant, turning off to wait upon a customer who was just entering.

Poor Charley was too retiring and modest to urge his mother's just claims, and so, with a downcast look and a sinking heart, he turned away from the shop.

It was now the middle of the afternoon. The snow had been cleared from the pavement, and stood piled up along its edges like a miniature range of mountains. The bricks were dry, and though it was still bitingly cold, the pavement was thronged with passengers—men wrapped up in comfortable great coats and mauds—ladies enveloped in cloth and velvet, and furs, children covered with merino, and swans' down, and chinchilla—everybody well defended against the freezing atmosphere, excepting only Charley and one or two other unfortunates like himself.

He walked along with his bare hands tucked into his empty pockets, his heart sinking with disappointment and grief, and his frame half fainting with cold and hunger. He could not bear to go home empty-handed, to his poor mother and suffering little sister. He resolved to walk about and seek some job of shoveling off snow, or putting in coal or wood, or any thing, in fact, that he could find to do. He turned off the gay avenue into Seventh street, that was comparatively quiet, and where the snow still lay upon the pavement with only a foot-path beaten through it. As he walked slowly up the street, he stopped at various stores to inquire if the proprietors wanted the snow shoveled from before their doors; but he was always either answered "No," or bluntly told to go about his business. So he walked on out Seventh street until the houses grew scarcer and the sidewalks more deserted.

At length on the snow path stretching before him, he saw some brilliant object glittering in the sun—it looked like some bright-scaled serpent coiled up, or some beautiful plumaged bird fallen there. He quickened his steps, reached the spot, and snatched it up.

Digitized by Google

Merciful Heaven! he nearly fell with astonishment and joy!

It was a heavy purse of green and gold, with broad gold coins glittering through its meshes.

Charley hugged it to his bosom and cast a frightened look all around him, fearing that some one might even spring up out of the earth and snatch it from him; then he was afraid of waking up and finding it all a dream; then he set off at the height of his speed, and never stopped or looked behind him until he reached his mother's house.

He pushed open the door, ran in, and stood trembling with his heart beating so that he could scarcely speak.

"Charley! Charley! What is the matter? What *have* you done? Is any one after you?" cried the mother in affright, while poor little Bessie raised herself up in the bed, and gazed at her brother in fear and distress.

"No, no! nobody's after me—I haven't done any thing wrong," said the boy, in a choking voice, "but—but I've found a fortune!"

"Found a fortune! What do you mean, boy?"

"I—I've found a purse, chuck full of money and doctors, and medicines, and jellies, for poor, dear little sissy, and—and—green tea and loaf sugar, and—and mutton broth, and—and lots of things for *you*, mother—oh dear! oh! boo-hoo-oo!" cried the boy, overcome by his feelings, bursting into tears, and sobbing as if his heart would break.

As for the poor mother, she really feared that her boy had lost his senses. But after he had had his cry out, and felt more composed, he calmly told her every thing that had happened at the clothes store and on his walk home, and then he took out the purse and showed it to her.

Oh! what a temptation it was to that poor woman.

There lay her sick child upon the bed without food or medicine.

Digitized by Google

There stood her cold and hungry boy looking into her face, not doubting that the purse was their own.

Night—a winter's night—was coming on; there was no wood, no food, no money, except this, in the house.

What a temptation!

She poured the money out and counted it; from one end of the purse came two eagles and a half eagle—twenty-five dollars; from the other end came a dollar and seven shillings in silver change. "Twenty-six dollars and eighty-seven and a half cents," said the widow, contemplating the treasure before her.

"That will buy a cord of wood, a barrel of flour, a ham, a pound of tea, a loaf of sugar, and shoes and clothes, and ever so many nice things for you and sissy, and leave ever so much money behind. Quick, mother, give me one of the tens, and let me go and order the wood, so that they can send it in this afternoon, and I can pitch it all in the cellar before night. And while they are carting it up, I can run round to the grocery store, and to market, and we'll have *such* a fire, and *such* a supper!" said Charley eagerly.

Oh! such a look of more than mortal heroism that mother gave that son.

"This money is not ours, Charley. We must not spend one cent of it," she said firmly.

And then the expression of dismay and chagrin with which the boy heard her words.

"Not spend a cent of it! Why, didn't I *find* it, mother? and don't we *want* it ever so badly, and doesn't it seem just as if the Lord sent it to us?" he asked.

"Yes, you *found* it, but then the owner *lost* it; we do so *want* it, but then we have no *right* to use it; the Lord sent it to us, truly, but He sent it as a *test* of our honesty. We will be faithful to the trust. We will be faithful unto death!"

Digitized by Google

"Oh, mother, mother, look at little sister."

"I do. She is in the Lord's hands."

"Well, but dear mother, if we cannot use it *all*, can't we use a *part?* Surely the owner, when we find him, will reward us; can't we take just a little of the reward beforehand? This loose silver change, now—it is a dollar and eighty-seven and a half cents. I know the owner would give me more than *this* for finding the purse; can't we use this? It would get us a supper and fire, and wood and food for to-morrow, also."

"Would my boy be a thief?"

"Thief! oh mother! I only thought of using beforehand the reward I should be sure to get for finding and restoring his beautiful purse."

"Would my Charley take money as a reward for being honest?"

The boy, who had taken the purse in his hand, now threw it upon the table.

"Would that be wrong?" he asked.

"Very wrong, Charley," replied his mother.

"Oh, how hard it is to be good."

"*Very* hard, Charley, but great is the reward of God's approbation. He is watching us now. Angels are watching with interest to see how we will bear this temptation. Let us bear it, Charley."

"Yes, we will, mother; oh! little sister—oh! little Bessie, must you faint for want of food?"

"If I die, angels will carry me to the Lord, and I will ask Him to send down help for you and mother, Charley," said the sick child. "Come and kiss me, Charley. I am going to sleep."

Charley went and kissed the little one very tenderly, and smoothed the pillow under her head, and drew up the bed clothes around her, and sat and held his hand upon her fair forehead until she went to sleep.

Digitized by Google

Was the struggle with temptation over then? and was the victory gained once and forever?

Ah, no! the battle between principle and privation was to be fought over and over again.

That afternoon the little family were reduced to the greatest straits. It was absolutely necessary to provide for the night and for the Sabbath, when they could not work; but how?

At length the widow thought of one thing about the house that might be turned into money; it was an old battered silver tablespoon—a sole relic of more prosperous times. She sent it to the silversmith, who gave six shillings for it as old silver.

With this they purchased a little wood and groceries that lasted them for a few days, until the mother could get more work.

But then the rent had to be paid, and the landlord was impatient and threatened them with expulsion. There was another severe temptation to satisfy his claim with a portion of the money in the purse. But they resisted it, and sold their stove to pay the debt.

Each week they grew poorer. Each week some portion of the scanty furniture had to be sold to satisfy some craving necessity of hunger or of cold. Each week the temptation to use the money in the purse waxed stronger; but with the bitterness of their hardships and the strength of their trial, the might of their virtue seemed to increase.

They could not afford to pay for advertising the lost purse, and they took no newspaper, and therefore would not see the advertisement for it. But they let their poor neighbors and friends know that they had found a purse of money, and that the owner might have it by coming and proving property. Still no one appeared to claim it.

And it had remained for a month upon their hands, when one day Charley brought home a bundle of work

Digitized by Google

from the store for his mother. When she had unrolled it, he took up the paper in which it had been wrapped and began to read.

It was a paper three weeks old, yet so poor was Charley in reading matter that he was glad to have even that. While he was reading the advertisements he suddenly made an exclamation—"Oh! mother, mother, here is the purse advertised."

"What! do tell me! read it, it may be a mistake," said the mother.

"No, it isn't a mistake, listen:

"LOST.—On Seventh street, between New York and Pennsylvania avenues, on Saturday afternoon, a green and gold purse, bordered with a wreath of forget-me-nots in their natural colors, and containing sixteen dollars in gold and silver. The finder may retain the contents by returning the purse at this office."

"Yes, it is the purse," said the widow. "You must go and restore it, Charley."

"But, mother, the *contents; this* purse that I found contains twenty-six dollars; the advertisement speaks of only sixteen."

"For all that it is the same purse; it probably belongs to some rich person who had been shopping or paying workmen, and did not know exactly how much money was left in it. Run, Charley, and restore it."

The boy picked up his hat, and, with his face all aglow, ran to the Intelligencer office.

That night when Mrs. Sherbourne was sitting in her comfortable back parlor, waiting tea for her husband, Mr. Sherbourne entered, and handing her a folded paper, said, "My dear, here is a note that was left at my store for you this evening."

"Oh! yes, I suppose it is some new charitable associa-

Digitized by Google

tion that somebody wants to engage me in; let it wait until we have had our tea. You look worn out, dear. What kept you so long?"

"Oh, that boy Jenkins."

"Your youngest salesman?"

"Yes; he has put his fingers in the till! I only discovered it this afternoon."

"Oh, how shocking! and that is the second boy you have had to dismiss for pilfering."

"Yes, you see the temptation is very strong to boys who are not confirmed in good principles."

"What will you do?"

"I don't know, I am sure. If I could only get a boy whom I could *fully* trust, I would make his fortune."

"Well, it is a pity; but cast care aside for the present, and take your tea," said the lady, as the waiter placed the steaming silver urn upon the table.

While the master of the house was sipping his "imperial," the mistress opened her note with an exclamation of joy.

"What is it?" inquired the gentleman.

"Oh! my purse, my purse is found, and has been left at the Intelligencer office."

"Indeed! I congratulate you. We must go to-morrow morning and get it."

Accordingly the next morning Mr. and Mrs. Sherbourne called at the Intelligencer office to reclaim the purse.

"But it is full of money," said Mrs. Sherbourne, "and I think you must have understood my directions to give its contents to the finder: and, by the way, who *was* the finder?"

"A very poor boy, madam, the son of a destitute widow, but one who firmly refused to take any reward for being honest."

"And he poor!"

Digitized by Google

"*Very* poor, indeed, madam, I should judge from his pinched looks and patched raiment."

"But why did you not *insist*?"

"I *did*, madam, but he was firm, and finally blushed with shame at the idea of being paid for honesty."

The lady's face was all aglow with admiration.

"Mr. Sherbourne, do you hear that?" she said, in trembling tones. Then turning again to the clerk,

"Where does this boy live?" she asked.

"Fortunately I asked his address: he lives at No. — Seventh street."

"Come, Mr. Sherbourne, let's go to him; he *must* be rewarded," said the lady, as she took her husband's arm and left the office.

A brisk walk of ten minutes brought them to the widow's door.

That morning the widow was sitting over a handful of coals, and working as hard as ever, for she had not yet earned the five dollars that she was obliged to earn before she could receive any money from her employer.

Little Bessie lay suffering patiently in bed. Charley was sitting upon a cricket netting a seine, for which he expected to get a dollar when finished.

There was a rap at the door, and to the widow's "Come in," entered Mr. and Mrs. Sherbourne. The lady held the purse in her hand. And the widow and her family understood at once why she came.

"I am the one who lost this purse, and this is the youth, I think, who restored it, and refused to accept any reward," said the lady, advancing and offering her hand to Charley, who blushed ingenuously as he took it.

"There was no reward merited, madam. The finding of the purse was *accident*. The restoration of it was *duty*," said the widow, as she arose and handed chairs to the visitors.

Digitized by Google

"And you will not suffer me, then, to comply with the terms of the advertisement?" asked the lady.

"I cannot permit myself or my son to he paid for doing that which *not* to have done would have been criminal," said the widow, with a mild dignity that constrained respect.

The lady cast a beseeching look at her husband, who, understanding her meaning, inquired of the boy:

"Charley, have you been to school?"

"Yes, sir, to the *free* school."

"Can you write a fair hand and keep accounts?"

"Oh yes, sir."

"Madam," said Mr. Sherbourne, turning to the widow, "I am in want of a youth to assist me in my store. If you are willing that your son should take the situation, I should be very glad to secure his services at once, at a salary of sixteen dollars a month. If he likes the business and remains with me, his salary shall be increased in proportion to his usefulness. Come, what say you?"

"I say that the Lord is good, and I praise and bless Him *first*, and you *next*, sir—you *next*. God bless you!" cried the widow, bursting into grateful, happy tears.

"And what say *you* to this arrangement, my son?" said the merchant, turning to Charley.

"Oh, dear sir, I thank you more than I can ever express, and I only fear that I shall never be worth sixteen dollars a month to you or anybody, though I would do my very best—*indeed* I would!"

"And if you do *that*, your value would be beyond price," answered the merchant.

"Charley, Charley!" said a little plaintive voice from the bed, "ask the dear gentleman to come and kiss me."

Mr. and Mrs. Sherbourne went immediately to the bedside and kissed the snow-white forehead and crimson cheek of the little sufferer, who returned their caresses.

Digitized by Google

"What is the matter with her?" asked the lady.

"A sort of *decline*, madame," answered the poor mother, with the tears springing to her eyes.

"I think it is the want of pure air and proper nourishment, and sufficient warmth; but all this can be supplied now," said the lady.

They then advanced to Charley a month's salary to fit himself out, and soon after took their leave.

There is little more to be said. The widow's family soon moved into a beautiful little white cottage, with green window blinds and a new garden, and which was furnished neatly and let to them at a low rent by Mr. Sherbourne.

Mrs. Sherbourne supplied the mother with as much family needle-work as she could do at a very fair price.

Little Bessie, with the comforts of life about her, soon got well.

And as for Charley, he so grows into the favor of his employer, that Mr. Sherbourne confidently looks forward to the day when he shall take him into partnership.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS' PUBLICATIONS.

The Books in this Catalogue are the Best and Latest Publications by the most Popular and Celebrated Writers in the World. They are also the most Readable and Entertaining Books published.

Suitable for the Parlor, Library, Sitting-Room, Railroad, Steamboat or Chamber Reading

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS, Philadelphia.

Booksellers, News Agents, Pedlers, etc., will be Supplied at Low Rates.

Copies of any of Petersons' Publications, or any other work or works Advertised, Published, or Noticed by any one at all, in any place, will be sent by us, Free of Postage, on the receipt of the Price.

MRS. SOUTHWORTH'S WORKS.

The Two Sisters. This is Mrs. Southworth's last new work. Two vols., paper cover. Price $1.00; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Three Beauties. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Vivia. The Secret of Power. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

India. The Pearl of Pearl River. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in cloth, $1.25.

The Wife's Victory. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, $1.25.

The Lost Heiress. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Missing Bride. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, $1.25.

Retribution: A Tale of Passion. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, $1.25.

The Curse of Clifton. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, $1.25.

The Discarded Daughter. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Deserted Wife. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

The Belle of Washington. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in cloth, for $1.25.

The Initials. A Love Story of Modern Life. Two vols., paper cover. Price $1.00; or in one volume cloth, $1.25.

The Dead Secret. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25

Kate Aylesford. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The whole of the above are also published in very fine style, bound in full Crimson, gilt edges, sides, backs, etc., making elegant presentation books. Price $2.00 a copy

JAS. A. MAITLAND'S GREAT WORKS.

Sartaroe. A Tale of Norway. Highly recommended by Washington Irving Complete in two volumes, paper cover Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Watchman. Complete in two large vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, $1.25.

The Wanderer. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

The Diary of an Old Doctor. Complete in two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in cloth, $1.25

The Lawyer's Story; or, The Orphan's Wrongs. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

W. H. MAXWELL'S WOKS.

Stories of Waterloo. One of the best books in the English language. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents

Brian O'Lynn; or, Luck is Every thing. Price 50 cents.

Wild Sports in the West. One volume. Price 50 cents.

Digitized by Google

MRS. CAROLINE LEE HENTZ'S WORKS.

The Lost Daughter; and Other Stories of the Heart. (Just published.) Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Planter's Northern Bride. Beautifully Illustrated. Two volumes, paper cover, 600 pages. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Linda. The Young Pilot of the Belle Creole. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Robert Graham. The Sequel to, and Continuation of Linda. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Courtship and Marriage. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Rena; or, The Snow Bird. Two vols, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Marcus Warland. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Love after Marriage. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Eoline; or, Magnolia Vale. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

The Banished Son. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Helen and Arthur. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

The whole of the above are also published in a very fine style, bound in full Crimson, with gilt edges, full gilt sides, gilt backs, etc., making them the best books for presentation, at the price, published. Price of either one in this style, $2.00 a copy.

MISS PARDOE'S WORKS.

Confessions of a Pretty Woman. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price 50 cents.

The Jealous Wife. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

The Wife's Trials. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

The Rival Beauties. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

Romance of the Harem. By Miss Pardoe. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

The whole of the above Five works are also bound in cloth, gilt, in one large octavo volume. Price $2.50.

The Adopted Heir. By Miss Pardoe. Two vols., paper cover. Price $1.00; or in cloth, $1.25. (*In Press.*)

MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS' WORKS.

Mary Derwent. This is Mrs. Ann S. Stephens' last new work. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, $1.25.

Fashion and Famine. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Old Homestead. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

The Gipsy's Legacy; or, the Heiress of Greenhurst. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

COOK BOOKS. BEST IN THE WORLD.

Miss Leslie's New Cookery Book. Being the largest, best, and most complete Cook Book ever got up by Miss Leslie. Now first published. One volume. Price $1.25.

Mrs. Hale's New Cook Book. By Mrs. Sarah J. Hale. One volume, bound. Price One Dollar.

Miss Leslie's New Receipts for Cooking. Complete in one large volume, bound. Price One Dollar.

Widdifield's New Cook Book, or, Practical Receipts for the Housewife. Recommended by all. One volume, cloth. Price One Dollar.

MRS. HALE'S RECEIPTS.

Mrs. Hale's Receipts for the Million. Containing Four Thousand Five Hundred and Forty-five Receipts, Facts, Directions, and Knowledge for All, in the Useful, Ornamental, and Domestic Arts. Being a complete Family Director and Household Guide for the Million. By Mrs. Sarah J. Hale. One volume, 300 pages strongly bound. Price, $1.25

Digitized by Google

CHARLES LEVER'S WORKS.

All neatly done up in paper covers.

Charles O'Malley, *Price* 50 cents.
Harry Lorrequer,..... 50 "
Horace Templeton,... 50 "
Tom Burke of Ours, 50 "
Jack Hinton, the Guardsman,..... 50 "
Arthur O'Leary,... *Price* 50 cents
Knight of Gwynne,.. 50 "
Kate O'Donoghue,.... 50 "
Con Cregan, the Irish Gil Blas,..... 50 "
Davenport Dunn, a Man of our Day,..... 50 "

A complete sett of the above will be sold, or sent to any one, to any place, *free of postage*, for $4.00.

LIBRARY EDITION.

THIS EDITION is complete in FOUR large octavo volumes, containing Charles O'Malley, Harry Lorrequer, Horace Templeton, Tom Burke of Ours, Arthur O'Leary, Jack Hinton the Guardsman, The Knight of Gwynne, Kate O'Donoghue, etc., handsomely printed, and bound in various styles, as follows:

Price of a sett in		Black cloth,	$6.00
"	"	Scarlet cloth,	6.50
"	"	Law Library sheep,	7.00
"	"	Half Calf,	9.00
"	"	Half Calf, marbled edges, French,	10.00
"	"	Half Calf, antique,	12.00

FINER EDITIONS.

Charles O'Malley, fine edition, one volume, cloth,..... $1.50
" " Half calf,..... 2.00

Harry Lorrequer, fine edition, one volume, cloth,..... 1.50
" " Half calf,..... 2.00

Jack Hinton, fine edition, one volume, cloth..... 1.50
" " Half calf,..... 2.00

Valentine Vox, fine edition, one volume, cloth,..... 1.50
" " Half calf,..... 2.00
" " cheap edition, paper cover,..... 50

Ten Thousand a Year, fine edition, one volume, cloth,..... 1.50
" " Half calf, ... 2.00
" " cheap edition, paper cover. Two volumes, ... 1.00

Diary of a Medical Student. By S. C. Warren, author of "Ten Thousand a Year." One volume, octavo,..... 50

HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATED WORKS.

Major Jones' Courtship and Travels. Beautifully illustrated. One volume, cloth. Price $1.25.

Major Jones' Scenes in Georgia. Full of beautiful illustrations. One volume, cloth. Price $1.25.

Sam Slick, the Clockmaker. By Judge Haliburton. Illustrated. Being the best funny work ever written by any one in this vein. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Simon Suggs' Adventures and Travels. Illustrated. One volume, cloth Price $1.25.

Humors of Falconbridge. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Frank Forester's Sporting Scenes & Characters. Illustrated. Two vols., cloth. Price $2.50.

Dow's Short Patent Sermons. First Series. By **Dow, Jr.** Containing 128 Sermons. Complete in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar; or paper cover, 75 cents.

Dow's Short Patent Sermons. Second Series. By **Dow, Jr.** Containing 144 Sermons. Complete in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar; or paper cover, 75 cents.

Dow's Short Patent Sermons. Third Series. By **Dow, Jr.** Containing 116 Sermons. Complete in one volume, cloth, for One Dollar; or paper cover, 75 cents.

American Joe Miller. With 100 Illustrations One of the most humorous books in the world. Price 25 cents.

Digitized by Google

CHARLES DICKENS' WORKS.

Fourteen Different Editions in Octavo Form.

"PETERSON'S" are the only complete and uniform editions of Charles Dickens Works ever published in the world; they are printed from the original London Editions, and are the only editions published in this country. No library either public or private, can be complete without having in it a complete sett of the works of this, the greatest of all living authors. Every family should possess a sett of one of the editions. The cheap edition is complete in Sixteen Volumes paper cover; either or all of which can be had separately, as follows:

Little Dorrit,.....*Price*	50 cents.	**Barnaby Rudge,**...*Price*	50 cents
Pickwick Papers,.....	50 "	**Old Curiosity Shop,**....	50 "
Dickens' New Stories,	50 "	**Sketches by "Boz,"**.....	50 "
Bleak House,.....	50 "	**Oliver Twist,**.....	50 "
David Copperfield,.....	50 "	**The Two Apprentices,**	25 "
Dombey and Son,.....	50 "	**Wreck of the Golden Mary,**.....	25 "
Nicholas Nickleby,.....	50 "	**Perils of certain English Prisoners,**.....	25 "
Christmas Stories,.....	50 "		
Martin Chuzzlewit,....	50 "		

A complete sett of the above Sixteen books, will be sold, or sent to any one, to any place, *free of postage*, for $6.00.

LIBRARY OCTAVO EDITION.

Published in Seven Different Styles.

This Edition is complete in SIX very large octavo volumes, with a Portrait on steel of Charles Dickens, containing the whole of the above works, handsomely printed and bound in various styles.

Vol. 1 contains **Pickwick Papers** and **Curiosity Shop.**
" **2** do. **Oliver Twist, Sketches by "Boz,"** and **Barnaby Rudge.**
" **3** do. **Nicholas Nickleby,** and **Martin Chuzzlewit.**
" **4** do. **David Copperfield, Dombey and Son,** and **Christmas Stories.**
" **5** do. **Bleak House,** and **Dickens' New Stories.**
" **6** do. **Little Dorrit.** In two books—Poverty and Riches.

Price of a sett, in	Black cloth,	$9 00
"	Scarlet cloth, extra,	10 00
"	Law Library style,	11 00
"	Half Turkey, or Half Calf,	13.00
"	Half calf, marbled edges. French,	14.50
"	Half calf, real ancient antique,	18.00
"	Half calf, full gilt backs, etc.	18.00

ILLUSTRATED OCTAVO EDITION.

THIS EDITION IS IN THIRTEEN VOLUMES, and is printed on very thick and fine white paper, and is profusely illustrated with all the original Illustrations by Cruikshank, Alfred Crowquill, Phiz, etc., from the original London editions, on copper, steel, and wood. Each volume contains a novel complete, and may be had in complete setts, beautifully bound in cloth, for Nineteen Dollars a sett; or any

Digitized by Google

volume will be sold separately at One Dollar and Fifty cents each. The following are their respective names:

Little Dorrit.	**Nicholas Nickleby.**
Pickwick Papers.	**Christmas Stories.**
Barnaby Rudge.	**Martin Chuzzlewit.**
Old Curiosity Shop.	**Sketches by "Boz."**
Bleak House.	**Oliver Twist.**
David Copperfield.	**Dickens' New Stories.**
Dombey and Son.	

Price of a sett, in	Black cloth, in Thirteen volumes,	$13.00
"	Full Law Library style,	26 00
"	Half calf, or half Turkey,	29.00
"	Half calf, marbled edges, French,	32.50
"	Half calf, ancient antique,	39.00
"	Half calf, full gilt backs, etc	39.00

DUODECIMO ILLUSTRATED EDITION.

Complete in Twenty-Five Volumes.

The Editions in Duodecimo form are beautifully Illustrated with over *Five Hundred Steel and Wood Illustrations*, from designs by Cruikshank, Phiz, Leech, Browne, Maclise, etc., illustrative of the best scenes in each work, making it the most beautiful and perfect edition in the world; and each work is also reprinted from the first original London editions that were issued by subscription in monthly numbers, and the volumes will be found, on examination, to be published on the finest and best of white paper.

This edition of Dickens' Works is now published complete, entire, and unabridged, in Twenty-five beautiful volumes, and supplies what has long been wanted, an edition that shall combine the advantages of portable size, large and readable type, and uniformity with other standard English authors.

This Duodecimo edition has been gotten up at an expense of *over Forty-Five Thousand Dollars*, but the publishers trust that an appreciative public will repay them for the outlay, by a generous purchase of the volumes. All they ask is for the public to examine them, and they are confident they will exclaim, with one voice, that they are the handsomest and cheapest, and best illustrated Sett of Works ever published. This edition is sold in setts, in various styles of binding, or any work can be had separately, handsomely bound in cloth, in two volumes each, Price $2.50 a sett, as follows:

Pickwick Papers.	**Sketches by "Boz."**
Nicholas Nickleby.	**Barnaby Rudge.**
David Copperfield.	**Martin Chuzzlewit.**
Oliver Twist.	**Old Curiosity Shop.**
Bleak House.	**Christmas Stories.**
Little Dorrit.	**Dickens' New Stories.**
Dombey and Son.	

Price of a sett, in	Twenty-Five volumes, bound in Black cloth, gilt backs,	$30.00
" "	Full Law Library style,	40.00
" "	Scarlet, full gilt, sides, edges, etc.,	45.00
" "	Half calf, ancient antique,	60.00
" "	Half calf, full gilt back,	60.00
" "	Full calf, ancient antique,	75 00
" "	Full calf, gilt edges, backs, etc.,	75.00

Digitized by Google

PEOPLE'S DUODECIMO EDITION.

Published in Eight Different Styles.

This Duodecimo edition is complete in Thirteen volumes, of near One Thousand pages each, with two illustrations to each volume, but is not printed on as thick or as fine paper as the Illustrated Edition, but contains all the *reading* matter that is in the Illustrated Edition, printed from large type, leaded. The volumes are sold separately or together, price One Dollar and Fifty cents each, neatly bound in cloth; or a complete sett of Thirteen volumes in this style will be sold for $19.00. following are their names:

Little Dorrit.
Pickwick Papers.
Martin Chuzzlewit.
Barnaby Rudge.
Bleak House.
David Copperfield.
Dombey and Son.
Nicholas Nickleby.
Christmas Stories.
Old Curiosity Shop.
Sketches by "Boz."
Oliver Twist.
Dickens' New Stories.

Price of a sett, in	Black cloth,	$19.00
" "	Full Law Library style,	24.00
" "	Half calf, or half Turkey,	26.00
" "	Half calf, marbled edges, French,	28.00
" "	Half calf, ancient antique,	32.00
" "	Half calf, full gilt backs,	32.00
" "	Full calf, ancient antique,	40.00
" "	Full calf, gilt edges, backs, etc.	40.00

ADVENTURES AND TRAVELS.

Harris's Explorations in South Africa. By Major Cornwallis Harris. This book is a rich treat. Two volumes, paper cover. Price $1.00; or in cloth, $1.25.

Wild Oats Sown Abroad; or, On and Off Soundings. Price 50 cents in paper cover; or cloth, gilt, 75 cents.

Don Quixotte.—Life and Adventures of Don Quixotte; and his Squire, Sancho Panza. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price $1.00.

Life and Adventures of Paul Periwinkle. Full of Illustrations. Price 50 cents.

EUGENE SUE'S GREAT NOVELS.

Illustrated Wandering Jew. With Eighty-seven large Illustrations. Two volumes. Price $1.00.

Mysteries of Paris; and **Gerolstein,** the Sequel to it. Two volumes, paper cover. Price $1.00.

First Love. A Story of the Heart. Price 25 cents.

Woman's Love. Illustrated. Price 25 cents.

Martin the Foundling. Beautifully Illustrated. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

The Man-of-War's-Man. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price 25 cents.

The Female Bluebeard. One volume. Price 25 cents.

Raoul de Surville. One volume. Price 25 cents. (*In Press.*)

GEORGE LIPPARD'S WORKS.

Legends of the American Revolution; or, Washington and his Generals. Two vols. Price $1.00.

The Quaker City; or, The Monks of Monk Hall. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Paul Ardenheim; the Monk of Wissahikon. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Blanche of Brandywine. A Revolutionary Romance. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

The Nazarene. One vol. Price 50 cents.

Legends of Mexico. One volume. Price 25 cents.

The Lady of Albarone; or, The Poison Goblet. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25. (*In Press.*)

New York: Its Upper Ten and Lower Million. One volume. Price 50 cents.

Digitized by Google

HUMOROUS AMERICAN WORKS.

With Original Illustrations by Darley and Others.

Done up in Illuminated Covers.

Major Jones' Courtship. With Thirteen Illustrations, from designs by Darley. Price 50 cents.

Drama in Pokerville. By J. M. Field. With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Louisiana Swamp Doctor. By author of "Cupping on the Sternum." Illustrated by Darley. 50 cents.

Charcoal Sketches. By Joseph C. Neal. With Illustrations. 50 cents.

Yankee Amongst the Mermaids. By W. E. Burton. With Illustrations by Darley. Price 50 cents.

Misfortunes of Peter Faber. By Joseph C. Neal. With Illustrations. by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Major Jones' Sketches of Travel. With Eight Illustrations, from designs by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Western Scenes; or, Life on the Prairie. By the author of "Major Jones' Courtship." 50 cents.

Quarter Race in Kentucky. By W. T. Porter, Esq. With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Sol. Smith's Theatrical Apprenticeship. Illustrated by Darley. Price Fifty Cents.

Yankee Yarns and Yankee Letters. By Sam Slick, alias Judge Haliburton. Price 50 cents.

Life and Adventures of Col. Vanderbomb. By author "Wild Western Scenes," etc. Price 50 cents.

Big Bear of Arkansas. Edited by Wm. T. Porter. With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Major Jones' Chronicles of Pineville. With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Life and Adventures of Percival Mayberry. By J. H. Ingraham. Price Fifty cents.

Frank Forester's Quorndon Hounds. By H. W. Herbert, Esq. With Illustrations. Price 50 cents.

Pickings from the "Picayune." With Illustrations by Darley Price Fifty cents.

Frank Forester's Shooting Box. With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents

Peter Ploddy. By author of "Charcoal Sketches." With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Streaks of Squatter Life. By the author "Major Jones' Courtship." Illustrated by Darley. 50 cents.

Simon Suggs.—Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs. Illustrated by Darley. Price 50 cents.

Stray Subjects Arrested and Bound Over. With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

Frank Forester's Deer Stalkers. With Illustrations. 50 cents.

Adventures of Captain Farrago. By Hon. H. H. Brackenridge. With Illustrations. Price Fifty cents.

Widow Rugby's Husband. By author of "Simon Suggs." With Illustrations. Price Fifty cents.

Major O'Regan's Adventures. By Hon. H. H. Brackenridge. With Illustrations by Darley. 50 cents.

Theatrical Journey-Work & Anecdotal Recollections of Sol. Smith, Esq. 50 cents.

Polly Peablossom's Wedding. By the author of "Major Jones' Courtship." Price Fifty cents.

Frank Forester's Warwick Woodlands. With beautiful Illustrations, illuminated 50 cents.

New Orleans Sketch Book. By "Stahl." With Illustrations by Darley. Price Fifty cents.

The Charms of Paris; or, Sketches of Travel and Adventures by Night and Day. 50 cents. *(In Press.)*

C. J. PETERSON'S WORKS.

Kate Aylesford. A Love Story. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one vol., cloth, for $1.25

Cruising in the Last War. First and Second Series. Being the complete work. By Charles J. Peterson. Price 50 cents

The Valley Farm; or, The Autobiography of an Orphan. A Companion to Jane Eyre. Price 25 cents.

Grace Dudley; or, Arnold at Saratoga. Price 25 cents.

Mabel; or, Darkness and Dawn. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar or bound in cloth, $1 25 *(In Press.)*

Digitized by Google

ALEXANDRE DUMAS' WORKS.

Count of Monte-Cristo. By Alexandre Dumas. Complete and unabridged edition. Beautifully Illustrated. Two volumes, paper cover. Price $1.00; or in cloth, $1.25.

Edmond Dantes. Being a Sequel to Dumas' celebrated novel of the "Count of Monte-Cristo." 1 vol. 50 cts.

The Three Guardsmen. By Alexandre Dumas. Complete in one large volume. Price 75 cents.

Twenty Years After. A Sequel to the "Three Guardsmen." One volume. Price 75 cents.

Bragelonne; the Son of Athos: being the continuation of the "Three Guardsmen," and "Twenty Years After." One volume. 75 cents.

The Iron Mask. Being the continuation and conclusion of the "Three Guardsmen." Two vols. Price $1.00.

Louise La Vallere; or, The Second Series and End of the "Iron Mask." Two volumes. Price $1.00.

The Memoirs of a Physician. Beautifully Illustrated. Two vols. Price One Dollar.

The Queen's Necklace. A Sequel to the "Memoirs of a Physician." Two volumes. Price One Dollar.

Six Years Later; or, The Taking of the Bastile. A Continuation of "The Queen's Necklace." 2 vols. $1.00.

Countess of Charny; or, The Fall of the French Monarchy. A Sequel to Six Years Later. Two vols. $1.00.

The Memoirs of a Marquis. Complete in two vols. Price $1.00

Diana of Meridor; or, France in the Sixteenth Century. Two volumes. Price One Dollar.

The Iron Hand; or, The Knight of Mauleon. Beautifully Illustrated. One volume. Price 50 cents.

The Forty-Five Guardsmen. Beautifully Illustrated. One volume. Price 75 cents.

Fernande; or, The Fallen Angel. A Story of Life in Paris. One volume. Price Fifty cents.

Thousand and One Phantoms. Complete in one vol. 50 cts.

George; or, The Planter of the Isle of France. One vol Price Fifty cents.

Genevieve; or, The Chevalier of Maison Rouge. One volume. Illustrated. Price 50 cents.

Sketches in France. One volume. Price 50 cents.

Isabel of Bavaria. One volume. Price 50 cents.

Felina de Chambure; or, The Female Fiend. 50 cents.

Andree de Taverney; or, The Second Series and End of the Countess of Charny. Two vols. $1.00. (*In Press.*)

The Conscript Soldier. A Tale of the Empire. Two volumes, paper cover. Price $1.00; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25. (*In Press.*)

The Corsican Brothers. 25 cents. (*In Press.*)

EMERSON BENNETT'S WORKS.

The Border Rover. Two large vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one volume, cloth, for $1.25.

Pioneer's Daughter; and the Unknown Countess. Complete in one volume. Price 50 cents.

Clara Moreland. Price 50 cents; or cloth, gilt, $1.00.

Viola. Price 50 cents; or in cloth, gilt, 75 cents.

The Forged Will. Price 50 cents, or cloth, gilt, $1.00.

Ellen Norbury. 50 cents; or one vol., cloth, $1.00.

Bride of the Wilderness. 50 cents.; or in cloth, 75 cents.

Kate Clarendon. 50 cents; or in cloth, gilt, 75 cents.

Heiress of Bellefonte; and Walde-Warren. 50 cents.

HARRY COCKTON'S WORKS.

Valentine Vox, the Ventriloquist. One vol., paper cover, 50 cts; or a finer edition in cloth for $1.50.

Sylvester Sound, the Somnambulist. Illustrated. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price 50 cents

The Sisters. By Henry Cockton, author of "Valentine Vox, the Ventriloquist." Price 50 cents.

The Steward. By Henry Cockton. Price 50 cents.

Percy Effingham. By Henry Cockton. Price 50 cents.

Digitized by Google

MRS. GREY'S POPULAR NOVELS.

Price Twenty-Five Cents each.

Gipsy's Daughter.
Lena Cameron.
Belle of the Family.
Sybil Lennard.
Duke and Cousin.
The Little Wife.
Manœuvring Mother.
Baronet's Daughters.
Young Prima Donna.
Old Dower House.
Alice Seymour.
Hyacinthe. [50 cents.
Passion & Principle.
Mary Seaham. 50 cents.

D'ISRAELI'S POPULAR NOVELS.

With a Portrait of D'Israeli in each volume.

Vivian Grey. One large volume, octavo. Price 50 cents.

Venetia; or, Lord Byron and his Daughter. Price 50 cents.

Henrietta Temple. A Love Story. Price 50 cents.

The Young Duke. One octavo volume. Price 38 cents.

Contarini Fleming. An Autobiography. Price 38 cents.

Miriam Alroy. A Romance of the 12th Century. Price 38 cents.

MISS ELLEN PICKERING'S WORKS.

Price Twenty-Five Cents each.

Orphan Niece.
Kate Walsingham.
Who Shall be Heir?
The Secret Foe.
The Expectant.
The Fright.
Quiet Husband.
The Heiress.
Poor Cousin.
Ellen Wareham.
Nan Darrel.
Prince and Pedlar.
Merchant's Daughter.
The Squire.
Agnes Serle.
The Grumbler. 50 cts.

FRANK FAIRLEGH'S WORKS.

Frank Fairlegh; or, Scenes in the Life of a Private Pupil. By Frank E. Smedley, Esq. Illustrated. Paper cover. Price 50 cents.

Lewis Arundel. By author of "Frank Fairlegh." Illustrated. One volume, paper cover. Price 75 cents.

Harry Racket Scapegrace. By author of "Frank Fairlegh." Complete in one volume. Paper cover. Price 50 cents.

Lorrimer Littlegood. By author of "Frank Fairlegh." Complete in two volumes paper cover. Price $1.00; or bound in one volume, cloth, for $1.25. (*In Press.*)

Harry Coverdale's Courtship, and All that Came of It. Now first published Entire and Unabridged. Illustrated. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or bound in one volume, cloth, $1.25. (*In Press.*)

CAPTAIN MARRYATT'S WORKS.

Price Twenty-Five Cents each.

Jacob Faithful.
Phantom Ship.
King's Own.
Snarleyow.
Midshipman Easy.
The Naval Officer.
Newton Forster.
Rattlin, the Reefer.
Japhet Search Father.
Pacha of many Tales.
Pirate & Three Cutters.
Percival Keene. 50 cts.
Poor Jack. 50 cents.
Sea King. 50 cents.
Peter Simple. 50 cents
Valerie. 50 cents

Digitized by Google

REYNOLDS' GREAT ROMANCES.

Mysteries of the Court of London. Complete in two large volumes, paper cover. Price $1.00.

Rose Foster; or, "The Second Series of the Mysteries of the Court of London." 3 vols., paper cover. $1.50.

Caroline of Brunswick; or, the "Third Series of the Mysteries of the Court of London." Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Venetia Trelawney; being the "Fourth Series, or final conclusion of the Mysteries of the Court of London." Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Lord Saxondale; or, The Court of Queen Victoria. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Count Christoval. The "Sequel to Lord Saxondale." Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Rosa Lambert; or, The Memoirs of an Unfortunate Woman. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Mary Price; or, The Adventures of a Servant-Maid. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Eustace Quentin. A "Sequel to Mary Price." Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Joseph Wilmot; or, The Memoirs of a Man-Servant. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

The Banker's Daughter. A Sequel to "Joseph Wilmot." Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar.

Kenneth. A Romance of the Highlands. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar.

The Rye-House Plot; or, Ruth, the Conspirator's Daughter. Two vols., paper cover. Price $1.00.

The Opera Dancer; or, The Mysteries of London Life. Complete in one octavo volume. Price 50 cents.

The Ruined Gamester. With Illustrations. Complete in one large octavo volume. Price Fifty cents.

Wallace: the Hero of Scotland. Beautifully Illustrated with Thirty-eight plates. Price Fifty cents.

The Child of Waterloo; or, The Horrors of the Battle Field. Complete in one octavo volume. 50 cents.

The Discarded Queen. One volume. Price 50 cents.

Lucrezia Mirano; or, The Countess and the Page. Complete in one large volume. Price 50 cents.

Ciprina; or, The Secrets of a Picture Gallery. Complete in one large volume. Price 50 cents.

The Necromancer. A Romance of the Times of Henry the Eighth. Two volumes. Price One Dollar.

Robert Bruce: the Hero King of Scotland, with his Portrait. One volume. Price Fifty cents.

Isabella Vincent; or, The Two Orphans. One volume, paper cover. Price 50 cents.

Vivian Bertram; or, A Wife's Honor. A Sequel to "Isabella Vincent." One vol., paper cover. 50 cents.

The Countess of Lascelles. The Continuation to "Vivian Bertram." One vol., paper cover. 50 cents.

Duke of Marchmont. Being the Conclusion of "The Countess of Lascelles." One vol., paper cover. 50 cts

Gipsy Chief. Beautifully Illustrated Complete in one large octavo volume Price Fifty cents.

Pickwick Abroad. A Companion to the "Pickwick Papers" by "Boz." One volume. Price Fifty cents.

Queen Joanna; or, the Mysteries of the Court of Naples. Illustrated. 50 cents.

The Soldier's Wife. Beautifully Illustrated. Complete in one volume. Price Fifty cents.

May Middleton; or, The History of a Fortune. Complete in one volume Price Fifty cents.

Massacre of Glencoe. Beautifully Illustrated. Complete in one volume. Price Fifty cents.

The Loves of the Harem. Price 50 cents.

Ellen Percy; or, The Memoirs of an Actress. Price 50 cents.

Agnes Evelyn; or, Beauty and Pleasure. Price 50 cents.

The Parricide. Beautifully Illustrated. Price 50 cents.

Life in Paris. Handsomely Illustrated. Price 50 cents.

Edgar Montrose. One volume. Price 25 cents.

J. F. SMITH'S BEST WORKS.

The Usurer's Victim. By J. F. Smith, Esq. Complete in one large volume. Price 50 cents.

Adelaide Waldgrave; or, The Trials of a Governess. Complete in one large volume. Price 50 cents.

Digitized by Google

AINSWORTH'S BEST WORKS.

Life of Jack Sheppard, the most noted burglar, robber, and jail breaker that ever lived. Illustrated 50 cents.

The Tower of London. With over One Hundred splendid Engravings. Two volumes. Price $1.00.

The Miser's Daughter. Complete in two large vols. Price $1.00.

Pictorial Life & Adventures of Guy Fawkes. Bloody Tower, etc. Illustrated. Price 50 cents.

The Pictorial Old St. Paul's. A Tale of the Plague and the Fire. Illustrated. Price 50 cents.

The Star Chamber. Illustrated. Price 50 cents.

Mysteries of the Court of Queen Anne. Price 50 cents.

Mysteries of the Court of the Stuarts. Price 50 cents.

Windsor Castle. One volume. Price 50 cents.

The Pictorial Newgate Calendar; or, The Chronicles of Crime. Beautifully Illustrated. 50 cents.

Life of Henry Thomas, the Western Burglar and Murderer. Full of Plates. One volume. Price 25 cents.

Pictorial Life & Adventures of Dick Turpin, the Burglar, Murderer, etc. One vol. Price 25 cents.

Life and Adventures of the Desperadoes of the New World. Illustrated. 1 vol. 25 cents.

Life of Ninon De L'Enclos With her Letters on Love, Courtship & Marriage. Illustrated. 1 vol. 25 cts.

Pictorial Life and Adventures of Davy Crockett. One volume. Price 50 cents.

Grace O'Malley—Her Life & Adventures. Price 38 cents.

Life & Adventures of Arthur Spring. Price 25 cents.

T. S. ARTHUR'S BEST WORKS.

Price Twenty-Five Cents each.

The Lady at Home.
Year after Marriage.
Cecilia Howard.
Orphan Children.
Love in High Life.
Debtor's Daughter.
Love in a Cottage.
Mary Moreton.
The Divorced Wife.
The Two Brides.
Agnes, or **Possessed.**
Lucy Sandford.
The Banker's Wife.
The Two Merchants.
Insubordination.
Trial and Triumph.
The Iron Rule.
Pride and Prudence.

GREEN'S WORKS ON GAMBLING.

Gambling Exposed; a full Exposition of all the various Arts, Mysteries, and Miseries of Gambling. By J. H. Green, the Reformed Gambler. Complete in two volumes, paper cover, Price One Dollar; or one volume, cloth, gilt, $1.25.

The Reformed Gambler; or, The Autobiography of the Reformed Gambler, J. H. Green. Written by Himself. Complete in two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol. cloth, gilt, for $1.25. (*In Press.*)

The Gambler's Life; or, The Autobiography of the Life, Adventures, and Personal Experience of Jonathan H. Green. Written by Himself. With a Steel Portrait of the Author, and other Illustrative Engravings. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or one volume, cloth, gilt, $1.25.

Secret Band of Brothers. Compiled by J. H. Green. Beautifully Illustrated from original designs, by Darley and Croome. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, gilt, for $1.25. (*In Press.*)

LIEBIG'S WORKS ON CHEMISTRY.

Agricultural Chemistry. Complete in one volume. Price 25 cents.

Animal Chemistry. Complete in one volume. Price 25 cents.

Letters on Chemistry.

The Potato Disease.

Chemistry and Physics in relation to Physiology and Pathology.

The above Five works of Professor Liebig are also published complete in one large octavo volume, bound. Price $1.50. The three last works are only published in the bound volume

Digitized by Google

PETERSON'S MAGAZINE

THE BEST AND CHEAPEST IN THE WORLD FOR LADIES.

This popular monthly will be greatly improved for 1860. It has a circulation of nearly 100,000: *or ten times as much as any other two dollar Magazine.* It contains nearly 1000 pages of double column reading matter yearly: from 25 to 30 Steel Plates and about 800 Wood Engravings: *proportionately more than any periodical, at any price, gives* The newspapers, very generally, pronounce it *superior in many respects, to the three dollar Magazines.* Subscribe for it, and

SAVE A DOLLAR.

The stories in "Peterson" are conceded to be *the best published anywhere.* The editors are Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, author of "Mary Derwent," "Fashion and Famine:" and Charles J. Peterson, author of "The Old Stone Mansion." "Kate Aylesford," "The Valley Farm," etc., etc; and they are assisted by Alice Carey, by Frank Lee Benedict, by the author of "Susy L's Diary," by T. S. Arthur, E. L. Chandler Moulton, Mehitable Holyoke, Virginia F. Townsend, Carry Stanley, Caroline E. Fairfield, Ellen Ashton, Rosalie Grey, F. Dewees, A. L. Otis, and all the most popular female writers of America. In addition to the usual quantity of stories, there will be given in 1860, several

THRILLING COPY-RIGHT NOVELETS

Equal in merit, at least, to those for which this Magazine has already attained such celebrity, and superior to those to be found anywhere else. Morality and Virtue are always inculcated. *Clergymen recommend this Magazine particularly for families in which there are daughters.* Its pictorial embellishments are unrivalled. Its

SUPERB MEZZOTINTS & OTHER STEEL ENGRAVINGS

Excel those in any other Magazine, and one at least is given in every number. Its

COLORED FASHION PLATES IN ADVANCE.

☞ IT IS THE ONLY MAGAZINE WHOSE FASHION PLATES CAN BE RELIED ON. ☜

Each number contains a Fashion Plate, engraved on steel, and colored; also, a dozen or more New Styles, engraved on wood; also, a Pattern, from which a Dress, Mantilla, or Child's Costume can be cut, without the aid of a mantua-maker—so that each Number, in this way, will SAVE A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION. The Paris, London, Philadelphia and New York Fashions are described at length, each month. Engravings of new styles of Caps, Bonnets, Head Dresses, Mantillas, Cloaks, Capes, Under-Garments, &c., &c., given in great profusion in every number.

COLORED PATTERNS IN EMBROIDERY.

The Work Table department of this Magazine IS WHOLLY UNRIVALLED. Every Number contains a dozen or more patterns in every variety of Fancy work; Crochet, Embroidery, Knitting, Bead-work, Shell-work, Hair-work, Wax Flowers, Stained Glass, Leather-work, Painting, Photographs, &c., &c., *with full descriptions.* Every Number contains a SUPERB COLORED PATTERN FOR A SLIPPER, PURSE, CHAIR SEAT, or some other useful, or ornamental article, and each of these would cost at a retail store, Fifty cents; *these can be had in no other American Magazine.*

AN ORIGINAL COOK-BOOK.

Will also be given in 1860. In addition, other receipts for the kitchen, for housekeeping in general, for invalids, for making cosmetics, &c., &c., will be given in every Number. ☞ A PIECE OF NEW AND FASHIONABLE MUSIC WILL APPEAR EACH MONTH. Also, hints for the Toilette, Etiquette, and all matters interesting to Ladies. **TRY IT FOR ONE YEAR!**

TERMS--ALWAYS IN ADVANCE:

One Copy for One Year, -	$2.00	Eight Copies, One Year,	$10.00
Three Copies for One Year,	5.00	Twelve Copies, One Year,	15.00
Five Copies for One Year,	7.50	Sixteen Copies, One Year,	20.00

PREMIUMS FOR GETTING UP CLUBS. Three, Five, Eight, Twelve, or Sixteen copies make a Club. To every person getting up a Club of Three, and remitting Five Dollars; or a Club of Five, and remitting Seven Dollars and a half; or a Club of Eight, and remitting Ten Dollars; we will send, *gratis*, our two splendid MEZZOTINTS of NIAGARA. To every person getting up a Club of Twelve, and remitting Fifteen Dollars we will send either an extra copy of the Magazine for 1860, or the two splendid Mezzotints of Niagara, as the getter up may prefer. To every person getting up a Club of Sixteen, and remitting Twenty Dollars, we will send the two splendid Mezzotints of Niagara, and also an extra copy for 1860. The Mezzotints are each 12 inches by 25.

Address, post-paid,

CHARLES J. PETERSON,
306 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

☞ **All Postmasters constituted Agents. A Specimen sent when desired.**

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS' PUBLICATIONS.

The Books on this Page are the Best and Latest Publications by the most Popular and Celebrated Writers in the World. They are also the most Readable and Entertaining Books published.

Suitable for the Parlor, Library, Sitting-Room, Railroad, Steamboat, or Chamber Reading

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS, PHILADELPHIA.

CHARLES DICKENS' WORKS.

Twenty-Nine Different Editions.

"PETERSON'S" are the only complete and uniform editions of Charles Dickens' Works ever published in the world; they are printed from the original London Editions, and are the only editions published in this country. No library, either public or private, can be complete without having in it a complete sett of the works of this, the greatest of all living authors. Every family should possess a sett of one of the editions. The cheap edition is published as follows:

Little Dorrit,	*Price* 50 cents.	**Christmas Stories,**	*Price* 50 cents.
Pickwick Papers,	50 "	**Martin Chuzzlewit,**	50 "
Dickens' New Stories,	50 "	**Barnaby Rudge,**	50 "
Bleak House,	50 "	**Old Curiosity Shop,**	50 "
David Copperfield,	50 "	**Sketches by "Boz,"**	50 "
Dombey and Son,	50 "	**Oliver Twist,**	50 "
Nicholas Nickleby,	50 "		

LIBRARY OCTAVO EDITION.

This Edition is complete in SIX very large octavo volumes, with a Portrait on steel of Charles Dickens, containing all of the above works, bound in various styles.

Price of a sett, in Black cloth,	$9.00
" Scarlet cloth, extra,	10.00
" Law Library style,	11.00
" Half Turkey, or Half Calf,	13.00
" Half calf, marbled edges, French,	14.50
" Half calf, real ancient antique,	18.00
" Half calf, full gilt backs, etc.	18.00

ILLUSTRATED OCTAVO EDITION.

THIS EDITION IS IN THIRTEEN VOLUMES, and is printed on very thick and fine white paper, and is profusely illustrated with all the original Illustrations by Cruikshank, Alfred Crowquill, Phiz, etc., from the original London editions, on copper, steel, and wood. Each volume contains a novel complete, and may be had separately, beautifully bound in cloth. Price One Dollar and Fifty cents each.

Price of a sett, in Black cloth, in Thirteen volumes,	$19.00
" Full Law Library style,	26.00
" Half calf, or half Turkey,	29.00
" Half calf, marbled edges, French,	32.50
" Half calf, ancient antique,	39.00
" Half calf, full gilt backs, etc.	39.00

Copies of any of the above Works will be sent by Mail to any one, Free of Postage, on mailing the Price in a letter to Peterson & Brothers.

Digitized by Google

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS' PUBLICATIONS.

The Books on this Page are the Best and Latest Publications by the most Popular and Celebrated Writers in the World. They are also the most Readable and Entertaining Books published.

Suitable for the Parlor, Library, Sitting-Room, Railroad, Steamboat, or Chamber Reading.

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS, PHILADELPHIA.

DUODECIMO ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF CHARLES DICKENS' WORKS.

The Editions in Duodecimo form are beautifully Illustrated with over *Five Hundred Steel and Wood Illustrations*, from designs by Cruikshank, Phiz, Leech, Browne, Maclise, etc., illustrative of the best scenes in each work, making it the most beautiful and perfect edition in the world. This edition of Dickens' Works is now published complete, entire, and unabridged, in Twenty-five beautiful volumes, and supplies what has long been wanted, an edition that shall combine the advantages of portable size, large and readable type, and uniformity with other standard English authors. This edition is sold in setts, in various styles of binding, or any work can be had separately, handsomely bound in cloth, in two volumes each. Price One Dollar and Twenty-Five cents a volume.

Price of a sett in Twenty-Five volumes, bound in Black cloth, gilt backs,	....	$30.00
" " Full Law Library style,	....	40.00
" " Scarlet, full gilt, sides, edges, etc.,	....	45.00
" " Half calf, ancient antique,	....	60.00
" " Half calf, full gilt back,	....	60.00
" " Full calf, ancient antique,	....	75.00
" " Full calf, gilt edges, backs, etc.,	....	75.00

PEOPLE'S DUODECIMO EDITION.

This Duodecimo edition is complete in Thirteen volumes, of near One Thousand pages each, with two illustrations to each volume, and contains all the *reading* matter that is in the Illustrated Edition, printed from large type, leaded. The volumes are sold separately, in cloth, price One Dollar and Fifty cents each.

Price of a sett, in Black cloth,	....	$19.00
" " Full Law Library style,	....	24.00
" " Half calf, or half Turkey,	....	26.00
" " Half calf, marbled edges, French,	....	28.00
" " Half calf, ancient antique,	....	32.00
" " Half calf, full gilt backs,	....	32.00
" " Full calf, ancient antique,	....	40.00
" " Full calf, gilt edges, backs, etc.	....	40.00

HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATED WORKS.

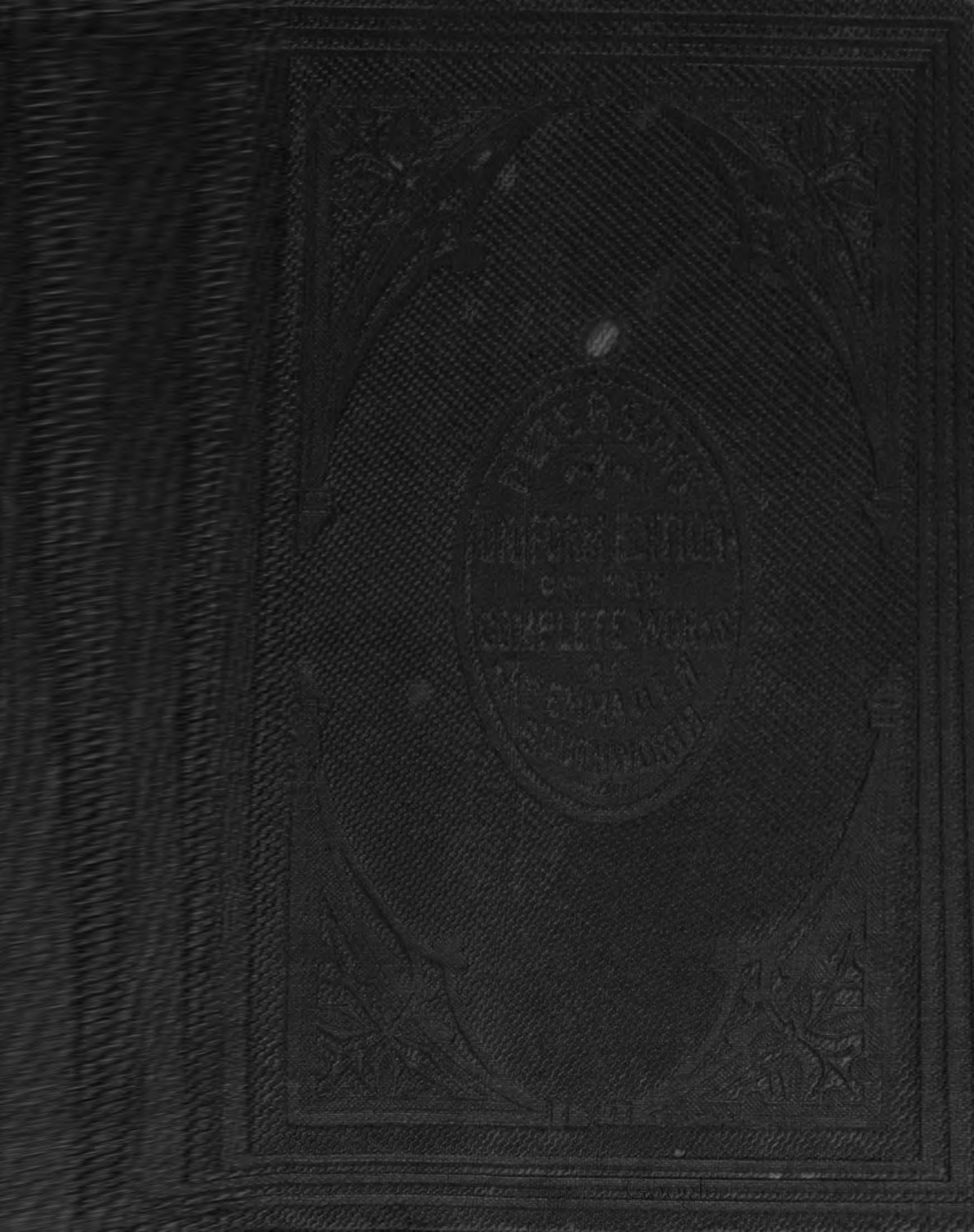
Major Jones' Courtship and Travels. Beautifully illustrated. One volume, cloth. Price $1.25.

Major Jones' Scenes in Georgia. Full of beautiful illustrations. One volume, cloth. Price $1.25.

Sam Slick, the Clockmaker. By Judge Haliburton. Illustrated. Two vols., paper cover. Price One Dollar; or in one vol., cloth, $1.25.

Simon Suggs' Adventures and Travels. Illustrated. One volume, cloth. Price $1.25.

Humors of Falconbridge. Two volumes, paper cover. Price One Dollar; or one vol., cloth, for $1.25.

Copies of any of the above Works will be sent by Mail to any one, Free of Postage, on mailing the Price in a letter to Peterson & Brothers.

Google